The Home of Dancing Śivan

PQD266339

THE TRADITIONS OF THE HINDU TEMPLE IN CITAMPARAM

Paul Younger

The Home of Dancing Śivan

Dancing Śivan̲ (Photograph by Robert Burcher)

The Home of Dancing Śivan

The Traditions of the Hindu Temple in Citamparam

PAUL YOUNGER

New York *Oxford*
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
1995

Oxford University Press

Oxford New York
Athens Auckland Bangkok
Calcutta Cape Town Dar es Salaam Delhi
Florence Hong Kong Istanbul Karachi
Kuala Lumpur Madras Madrid Melbourne
Mexico City Nairobi Paris Singapore
Taipei Tokyo Toronto

and associated companies in
Berlin Ibadan

Copyright © 1995 by Paul Younger

Published by Oxford University Press, Inc.,
198 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016

Oxford is a registered trademark of Oxford University Press, Inc.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be
reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted,
in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical,
photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the
prior permission of Oxford University Press.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Younger, Paul.
The home of dancing Śivan̠ : the traditions of the Hindu temple
in Citamparam / Paul Younger.
p. cm. Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-19-509532-4 (cloth). — ISBN 0-19-509533-2 (pbk.)
1. Nataraja Temple. 2. Siva (Hindu deity)—Cult—India—
Chidambaram. 3. Chidambaram (India)—Religious life and customs.
I. Title.
BL1243.76.C562N389 1995
294.5'35'095482—dc20 94-43174

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed in the United States of America
on acid-free paper

This work is dedicated to the memory of
Krishna Sivaraman
and
Susanna Oommen Younger

Preface

When I entered graduate school in the 1960s I was frustrated to learn that there was no way a student of Hinduism could study the temples where Hindus worshiped. It was taken for granted that one would study Vedic thought, or maybe a commentator or a modern reformer, but not the "medieval" temples with their "mysterious" practices. At the time it did not occur to me that it was the Protestant bias of Western scholarship that had been presenting Hinduism in this distorted fashion, and I accepted as at least half-truths the arguments that temples would not welcome scholarly attention, and that the priests who ran them had no knowledge of the earlier traditions that had been housed in their institutions. By the 1970s new scholarly interests had begun exploring the Epics and Purāṇas, and it became possible to get a little closer to religious practice, but that only whet my interest in temples even more. In due time I stubbornly set about to find out what the living traditions of the temples were really like.

I started somewhat hesitantly by observing and writing about temple festivals where one could safely get lost in the huge crowds. Much to my surprise I soon discovered that I was welcomed onto the temple grounds by the priests, ascetics, and lay managers who run these institutions. Although these people were not often academically trained, they were usually quite learned about their own traditions and often knew all the hymns, rituals, and important historical stories of the tradition by heart. They could not read the inscriptions on the temple walls, but were confident that the inscriptions would confirm their understanding of the tradition, and were quite open to having the tradition explored from an academic perspective.

My choice of Citamparam as the temple tradition I wanted to study in depth came about gradually. I had decided fairly early on that I wanted to study a Śivan̲ temple, mainly because the word "tradition" was always used in such a careful way by worshipers describing what was important about Śivan̲ temples. I had visited Citamparam a number of times, but I was a bit in awe of its rich tradition and the fact that all South Indians still describe it as "The Temple," even though it is not one of the biggest or busiest temples today. Two chance developments helped change my mind. On a return trip to the temple with my teenaged son, he suddenly became a great favorite of some of the priests of the temple who were about his own age. Watching the priests in this disarming context helped me to see them in a somewhat different light as the innocent and enthusiastic custodians of a tradition they too were a bit in awe of. The second chance development was that my colleague in Canada, Krishna Sivaraman, had inherited a centuries-old family tradition of employing a priestly family of Citamparam to perform regular rituals on his behalf. He soon had me believing that Citamparam was my "home" as well as his, and my inquiry into temple traditions came to focus on Citamparam.

This study took me much longer than I had at first intended. The tradition of a temple such as Citamparam has many facets and covers many ages, so that one constantly gets a wonderful feeling that there is much more to uncover. And because the tradition is very much alive one returns to the temple over and over again, and each time there are changes in the tradition that provoke one to reflect on its meaning yet once more. So this study is really more like an interim report than a final word, the story of what one person within a few short years could come to understand of a complex tradition of worship that has been carried on for almost two millennia.

There are many persons who should be thanked for kindnesses received during the years this project was underway. Many of the Dīṭcitar or priestly families showed me hospitality, graciously responded to my endless questions, and prayed for me and sent me holy ash or *vipūti* all over the world. Honoring their tradition of remaining a group of "equals," I want to thank them all together. My "co-brother," the late Dr. Al. Annamalai and his family, showed me hospitality and showered me with suggestions as the project began. And Hillary Rodrigues, R. Nagaswamy, and my wife, Cathy Hird, read the text and made many helpful suggestions.

Finally, there are two persons who shared intimately in my pilgrimage to Citamparam, and who even helped revise early versions of the manuscript, but who have now gone on to other worlds. Krishna Sivaraman was a friend from my student days in Banaras and was my colleague in Canada for almost twenty years. He smiled knowingly at my first comment about wanting to study a Śivaṉ temple, and just took for granted that I would study Citamparam where he had such close religious ties. He did not at first realize that for years he would have to continue to talk about Citamparam, but he patiently read the texts with me, listened to my interpretations, and eagerly read whatever I wrote. Just before he died he sent his brother to Citamparam with special prayers for all of us who love that place. My first wife, Susanna Oommen, was raised as a Christian in Kerala, South India, and as a child she was forbidden to go into temples. Somehow she came to feel that Citamparam was an exception, and the priestly families loved her and she loved them. Fighting back her cancer she spent the last year of her life in a passionate effort to render verses of the *Kōyil Purāṇa* or temple legend of Citamparam into English. This work is dedicated to the memory of these fellow pilgrims.

Hamilton, Ontario
December 1994

P. Y.

Note on Transliteration

Because the setting of this study is the Tamiḻ-speaking area of South India, the transliteration of Indian words is in accord with the system of the *Tamil Lexicon* (1936).

Much of the religious vocabulary used by Tamiḻs is borrowed from Sanskrit. Some scholars have tended to transliterate all these loan words in the style used for transliterating Sanskrit. I have tried to follow the usage of spoken Tamiḻ. In general strictly ritual vocabulary remains Sanskrit. Terms such as *liṅkam* take a Tamiḻ spelling. And names such as Śivaṉ end up as hybrids in that the Sanskrit letter Ś is retained, but the Tamiḻ ending ṉ is used. This is the system the *Tamil Lexicon* seems to use, and I find that my Tamiḻ readers are comfortable with it.

Contents

Introduction, 3

PART I WORSHIP

Story 1 The Priests and the Daily Ritual, 13
Story 2 The Worshipers and the Festival Celebrations, 46

PART II WOOD AND STONE

Story 3 The Builders and the Building, 81
Story 4 The Donors and Their Political Connections, 125

PART III WRITINGS

Story 5 The Legend Books and the Local Traditions, 163
Story 6 The Hymns of the Saints and the Śaiva Schools, 190

Conclusion, 233
Bibliography, 239
Index, 247

The Home of Dancing Śivan

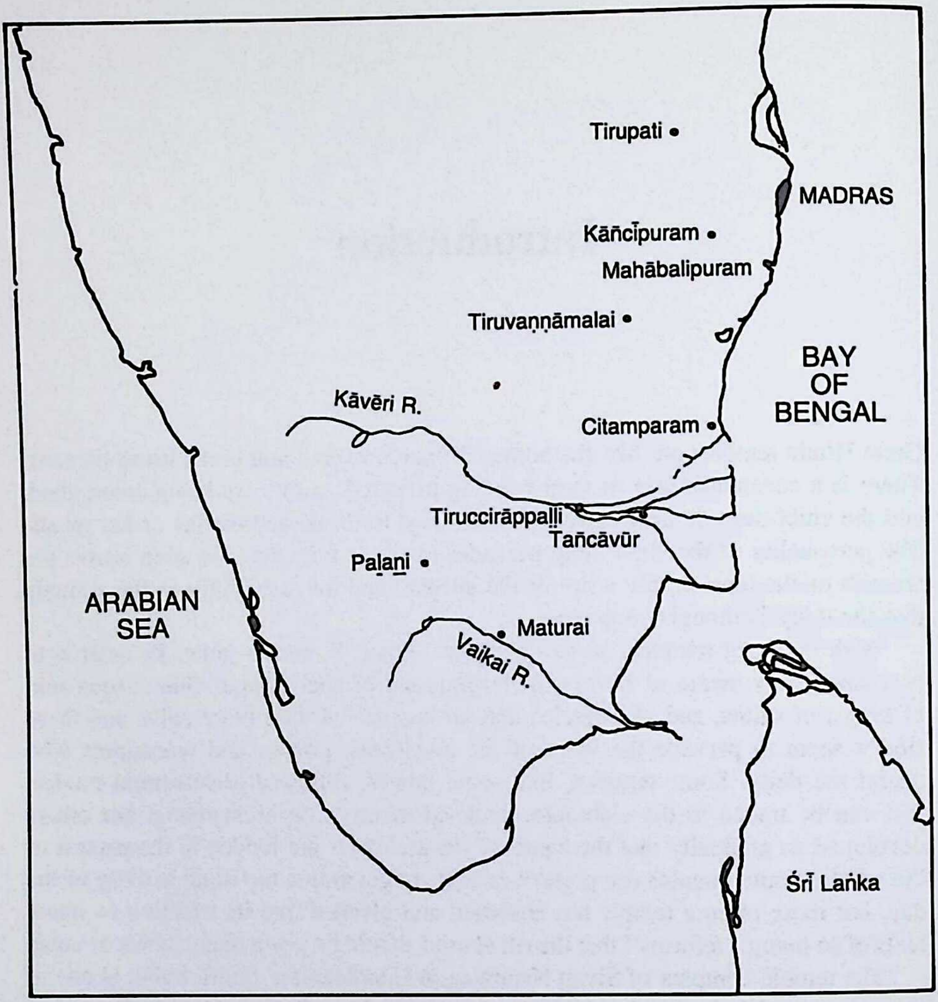
Introduction

Great Hindu temples are like the homes of much revered and much loved persons. There is a constant bustle as food is being prepared, guests are being entertained, and the chief deity is being awakened, allowed to dress, and eat his or her meals. The personality of the chief deity pervades every activity and one soon senses the warmth or the tension, the noise or the silence, and the sociability or the solitude that the deity is thought to prefer.

With the great temples, no two of these "homes" are the same. To enter is to be immediately aware of history, of legend, and of social class. One is soon told of kings, of saints, and of miracles that are associated with these halls, and these stories seem to pervade the work of the musicians, priests, and worshipers who attend the deity. Some temples, like some homes, followed architectural models that can be traced to the elaborate medieval manuals on architecture, but others developed so gradually that the hands of the architects are hidden in the pattern of the whole. Some temples use prescribed texts to determine the ritual activity of the day, but more often a temple has absorbed and blended into its tradition so many texts of so many "reforms" that the ritual used should be given many labels or none.

The temple complex of Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲ in Citamparam,[1] South India, is one of the truly great Hindu temples. Its history and legend are somewhat richer than most, but what makes it unique is that it is the only temple where the presiding deity is Śivan̲ in his dancing form. The *ānanda tāṇḍava* dance that Śivan̲ performs in Citamparam is a dance of joy, and the presence that the deity brings to the life of the Citamparam temple complex is pervaded with that joy. The present study is an attempt to understand the life of that temple complex in all its many facets.

The tradition of any important South Indian temple includes romantic stories of founding legends, royal donations, priestly quarrels, saintly devotion, and miraculous and satisfying encounters with the divine. The physical features of the temple complex usually reflect this tradition, and include a few halls or shrines of sculptural or architectural beauty, many less artistic halls, shrines, and walkways, as well as a few water reservoirs and sacred trees, each representing what some worshipers wanted to add to the tradition. Each physical feature tells its own story of past experience, and calls out to the worshiper or visitor to renew that aspect of the tradition in his or her final experience of meaning. The physical temple houses a complex human community, and most temples have a team of priests (or more


Tirupati
MADRAS
Kāñcīpuram
Mahābalipuram
Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
BAY OF BENGAL
Kāvēri R.
Citamparam
Tiruccirāppaḷḷi
Tañcāvūr
Paḻani
ARABIAN SEA
Maturai
Vaikai R.
Śrī Laṅka

Map of South India

commonly a few teams of competing priestly groups), resident and visiting ascetics, people going into trance, musicians, cooks, lay committees of managers, prominent politicians or other notable adherents, pilgrim visitors, regular devotees, reformers and renovators, and high-caste and/or low-caste worshipers, each with their own tradition of the meaning of worshiping in this place. Hindu temple complexes often provide a central focus for the culture around them, not only by establishing a setting for religious experience, but also by including among its activities functions that other cultures might label familial, economic, political, or intellectual.

In recent years scholars have become more aware of the centrality of the temple in Indian society and culture, and more attention is now being paid to its functions in realms such as the economic or political.[2] A clear idea of just what all the functions of a Hindu temple complex are and how they work to effect the integration of the society has yet to emerge. Only when the history and sociology of a number of temples has been traced out with some care will it be possible to take up that larger task.

Reconstruction of the histories of some of the larger temple complexes of South India is a task that can now be accomplished with considerable confidence. Most of the empirical evidence needed for such a task is available. Art history has reached a stage where we can now determine with reasonable accuracy when most styles of sculpture and architecture were prevalent. The thousands of inscriptions on the temple walls are being systematically read, and they provide reliable dates and many details about the important donations made to the temples. Legend books, hymn books, and the biographies of saints provide rich interpretations of religious experience. Although these written sources were summarily dismissed by colonial historians as of no historical value, scholars have now learned to read them as revealing records of the age in which they were written. For most of the major temples these evidences are often sufficiently complete that, when they are combined together, they provide a more or less continuous story that stretches from the early centuries of the common era right down to the present.

The fact that a living tradition continues in most cases to carry on this history both enrichs and distorts the story. On the one hand the story is enriched in many ways because it is possible to discover rituals and priestly practices that unwittingly preserve the past, as well as schemes of interpretation that seek to carry on both the thought and practice of the past. On the other hand the priests and worshipers of the present sometimes have a great deal at stake in maintaining that the present ways of thinking and behaving are in exact conformity with the past, and in those cases the sense of change and variety one can naturally expect in a tradition is not something they are keen to take into account. In the end, if one functions as both an anthropologist observing the present and a historian looking for evidence of the past, one starts to find that the evidence from one source usually reinforces that from the other. The living traditions of the temples are deeply rooted in the past, and ritual activities one can observe today often call for explanations that are buried in the past. It is often with a set of questions that arose as one observed the traditions of worship as they are carried on today that one turns to the independent records of art history, inscription, and literature to gain an insight into the meaning of those traditions.

The temple complex in Citamparam was deeply involved in every aspect of South Indian history, and the priests and worshipers have developed a story of the temple's past that links it with most of the major saints and rulers of the area. These local traditions about the temple were generally consistent with the traditional histories and biographies of the area, and over the centuries the place the temple held in those larger traditions was widely acknowledged. The earliest hymnists knew the place as "Tillai," after the name of the shrub that grew in the forest where the temple was located. The famous saint Māṇikkavācakar from the relatively distant Maturai region is said to have heard of the temple and become restless until he was released from his government job and was able to go there for the remainder of his life. When the Cōḻa rulers started their empire they placed a gold shingled roof on the temple and began to use it as their spiritual home. Eventually the theologically significant name of "Citamparam"—"the Space [*amparam*] of Consciousness [*cit*]"—(Sanskrit: "Cidambaram") came to be used, but late medieval poets came more and more to speak of the temple simply by the generic name "*Kōyil*" or the "The Temple," as if it were the model for the thousands of other temples in the region.

From the early centuries of the common era right through the eighteenth century there was an abundance of acceptable evidence indicating how the temple tradition understood itself and what place it held in the history of the region. In the nineteenth century, however, a new, colonially inspired, style of historiography was introduced into India by British historians, and the story of South India's past was altered in ways that dramatically affected the story of Citamparam. The new historiography did not concern itself with temple traditions as such. Nevertheless, by dismissing completely the chronologies established in the temple traditions, by focusing on a few militarily notable rulers, and by redefining the religious history as a story of "reform" on the model of the Catholic-Protestant history of Europe, the new historiography created an altogether different story of what took place in South India. As a result, the temple traditions were sometimes characterized as confused and mistaken about events that they thought were central to the story of their past. Having adopted this kind of historiography, some scholars at the turn of the century were willing to dismiss temple traditions altogether as sources for reliable historical evidence, and were prepared to present Hinduism in terms of its "classical" and "modern" periods as if there were little but an era of darkness in between. Scholars have since come step by step to alter this judgment, and to value the traditions of South India for both their richness and continuity, but the challenge of finding the best ways to utilize the evidence of the tradition in establishing a reliable history remains.

It is not possible in a work about one temple tradition to go into all the ramifications of colonial historiography, but it is necessary to figure out how to deal with the many controversies which that historiography has stirred up within the tradition of this temple. Many of the articles and books written about Citamparam in the recent past have been preoccupied with one or another of these controversies.[3] Alternate dates for many of the saints have been suggested; the religious initiatives of the court have been shifted from one king and one century to another; the traditional sequences in which various reforms were undertaken and various buildings within the temple complex were thought to have been set in place have been challenged; and the role of the priests in each stage of the development has been questioned. Looked at in isolation each of these controversies seems difficult to resolve, and one gets the overall impression that the temple tradition might be in considerable disarray. When looked at in the overall context of the many datable inscriptions and the uncontested historical evidence for dozens of royal building projects and saints' visits, however, the controversies over the dates of a few saints and a few building projects seem more and more tangential, while the main outline of the temple tradition is supported by a wide variety of reliable sources.

In this study, therefore, we will not begin with the controversies stirred up by the historiography of the past century, but we will first of all attempt to allow the evidence from different aspects of the temple tradition to speak for itself. We will begin with the living traditions of worship as they take place in the temple today. We will then examine the three hundred inscriptions on the temple walls and seek to determine from them, and from the evidence of art history, when the many parts of the temple were constructed and what innovations in the worship tradition they made possible. Using the inscriptions and the abundant literature about the temple, we should then be able to take up the complex historical questions of what role the famous kings and saints of the region played in the life of the temple.

Finally, it is necessary to explain why this account of the Citamparam temple tradition is being presented as six separate "stories." In conducting the research for this study it gradually became obvious that there were three different kinds of evidence involved. First of all, there were the living traditions of worship within the temple. The priests of the temple were very open to describing both their ritual duties and their management procedures, and both priests and worshipers were willing to discuss what the worship tradition meant to them. This "fieldwork" experience was much more rewarding than I had anticipated, and in some ways the tradition as I see it is very much a product of the directions in which my priestly and lay informants led me. Second, there were the buildings themselves. One can learn an enormous amount from the buildings in a place like Citamparam where dozens of building projects were spread over many centuries. In this inquiry one works partly as a kind of archaeologist trying to decide what was built after what; partly as an art historian linking the different structures with well-known art traditions; and partly as an epigraphist reading through the three hundred inscriptions and associating them with the different structures and with the known events and personalities of South Indian history. This is slow and sometimes tedious work, but when the puzzle comes together in the end a very reliable history starts to emerge. The third kind of evidence the tradition made available was literature. There were two legend books specifically about the temple, dozens of hymns inspired by the temple, and many saintly biographies for which the temple provides the major setting. Some of this literature is rich and beautiful in its own right, and some of it has been studied by scholars interested in questions of biography or theology that do not center on Citamparam, but all of it is central to the historian who wants to understand the temple's tradition, and it needed to be combed through with that question in view.

Investigating each of these three different kinds of evidence eventually led me—in each case to a couple of different lines of inquiry—one line of inquiry into a feature of the tradition that was unavoidable, and one into a more contextual matter that gave the temple tradition its place in the larger arena of South Indian society. The study of the worship traditions led inevitably into an examination of the daily routines and the legendary priesthood of the temple that carries on the daily rituals, but it also led to a wider study of the society living in the region around the temple and the many different classes of lay devotees who normally would not enter the temple but whose religious longings have been expressed in the richly textured festival traditions associated with Citamparam. The examination of the building led unavoidably to an inquiry into the many different structures and their respective functions, but reading the inscriptions on the walls of the temple also led to a more contextual inquiry into the donors involved in both the building and maintenance of the temple, and the social and political changes in society that their donations reflected. And, finally, the study of the literature led to an unavoidable inquiry into the unusual legend books written for the use of the worshipers at the temple, and then to the frequent references to the temple in the famous hymn traditions of South Indian Śaivism, which required an inquiry into the religious and theological interests of the important saints linked with the temple.

Each of these inquiries led to a "story," which seemed to hold together best when allowed to stand on its own. Each of the six stories to be presented here represents a set of self-consciously related changes in one aspect of the temple tradition. The priests carefully seek to link themselves and their ritual traditions with the legendary Mūvāyiravar ascetics who are supposed to have established the temple. Each builder has to take into account the buildings that are already there and has to add to that story of the tradition with a careful eye on the builders who have already spoken. In a similar way donors know the reputations of those who already have their names inscribed on the walls before them, and hymnists probably often knew by heart the hymns of their predecessors. The legend books and the festivals represent more complex forms of tradition building in that they operate at a more "popular" level and are giving summary expression to a great diversity of social and religious symbolism, but there too the sense of an accumulating store of symbols developing over time and carefully responding to the preexisting storehouse can also be seen. Where there are links between stories we will, of course, attempt to point them out, but our focus will be on letting the voices of the tradition speak in the self-consciously formed patterns that are used as a tradition evolves. It is my hope that these six "stories" will allow you to hear those voices.

In the telling of each of the six "stories" an attempt will be made to focus on both the *persons* who initiated change and the *tradition* that took up the initiative and wove it into the larger story. Humanistic studies have tended to focus on the poets, saints, or others involved in the genesis of culture, while cultural anthropology has focused more on the product that results over time. By incorporating both of these emphases in the same story I am hoping that we will be able to present a sense of the religious tradition as a living system of communication in which certain individuals experience the divine and express their wonder and joy in a way that allows others to then share in that experience as they participate in the tradition thus created.[4]

The six "stories" connected with the Citamparam temple complex I will be telling are the following: the story of the special priestly community that carries on the daily ritual activities inside the temple; the story of the worshipers who live in the region around and know the deity of the temple almost exclusively through the festival celebrations of the temple complex; the story of the various builders and the physical structures they put up; the story of the kings, landlords, and others who made donations and wrote inscriptions on the walls; the story of the legend writers who set out the oral and written traditions associated with the temple; and the story of the hymnists, saints, and theologians for whom the temple served as a focus of religious life.

In presenting these six different "stories" from the tradition of the Citamparam temple complex, I as the author will be tending to treat them as separate stories about priests, festivals, art, inscriptions, *tala purāṇas*, and saints, even though I will be very aware that they have for centuries become part of a mysteriously integrated temple tradition. I presume that a few readers will like the separateness of the individual studies and the clearer account of the evidence in each area that can be provided in this way, but I suspect that most readers will—like a worshiper in the temple—blend it all into a common story of "what goes on in Citamparam" and focus on the overall spirit of the tradition rather than on the specific historical evidence in each area. This difference between the perspective of the author and the reader is informative, for it reflects, I think, the communication system of Citamparam where priests, worshipers, builders, kings, poets, and saints each spoke with specific intentions and structures of thought in mind, and where their ideas were received into a more dynamic and flexible thought process in the ongoing temple tradition. It is in trying to discern how distinguishable thought structures are blended together in the formation of a temple tradition that we will learn what it was that made the Hindu temple such a flexible and enduring "center" for Indian society.

Notes

1. The letter "n̲" at the end of commonly used names such as Śivan̲ and Naṭarājan̲ (the honorific ending "r" is sometimes used instead of the "n̲" in the case of Naṭarājan̲), is the Tamil̲ ending for these names, and serves as a reminder that this book is a study of religion in a Tamil̲-speaking region. Sometimes common usage in Tamil̲nāṭu involves a combining of Sanskrit and Tamil̲. In the names Śivan̲ and Naṭarājan̲, for instance, the "Ś" and the "j" are Sanskrit letters that are usually retained in Tamil̲ spelling and pronunciation of these names. (The more strictly Tamil̲ spellings would be Civan̲ and Naṭarācan̲.)

2. The literature is vast and need not all be cited here. A good collection of essays by some of the best scholars taking this approach is found in Burton Stein 1978.

3. The extant literature on Citamparam is not very great considering the importance of the temple.

The first modern study was Srinivasachari 1941. Balasubrahmanyan (1943, 1944) did some original work on the inscriptions. The next study was Ramakrishnan Aiyer 1946. Somasundaram (1955) 1963 is a generally reliable, but incomplete and poorly organized study.

Harle 1963 is a good art history of the *kōpurams*, but is less reliable with regard to the wider history and tradition of the temple complex. Ramalinga 1965 is an M. A. thesis, Annamalai University. Kulke 1970 is a thorough study of the Sanskrit legend book of the temple. Natarajan 1974 repeats the evidence of Somasundaram in a more readable form. Satyamurti 1978 is a standard art history. Balasubrahmanyam 1979 makes only a few offhand suggestions about the history of the temple, but does translate the long inscription of Nāralō-kavīran̲ on the remodeling of the temple. Swamy (1979) presents a number of radical hypotheses about the history of the temple which have not won wide acceptance, but are in a way interesting and suggestive. Loud 1990 is a Ph.D. thesis from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Many other works discuss the temple from a single perspective. On Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲, see Tesikar 1967 Sivaramamurti 1974. On dance and religion, see Gaston 1982. On Śaiva history, see Zvelebil 1985.

4. I am indebted to Jurgen Habermas (1979) for some dimensions of this understanding of society and culture.

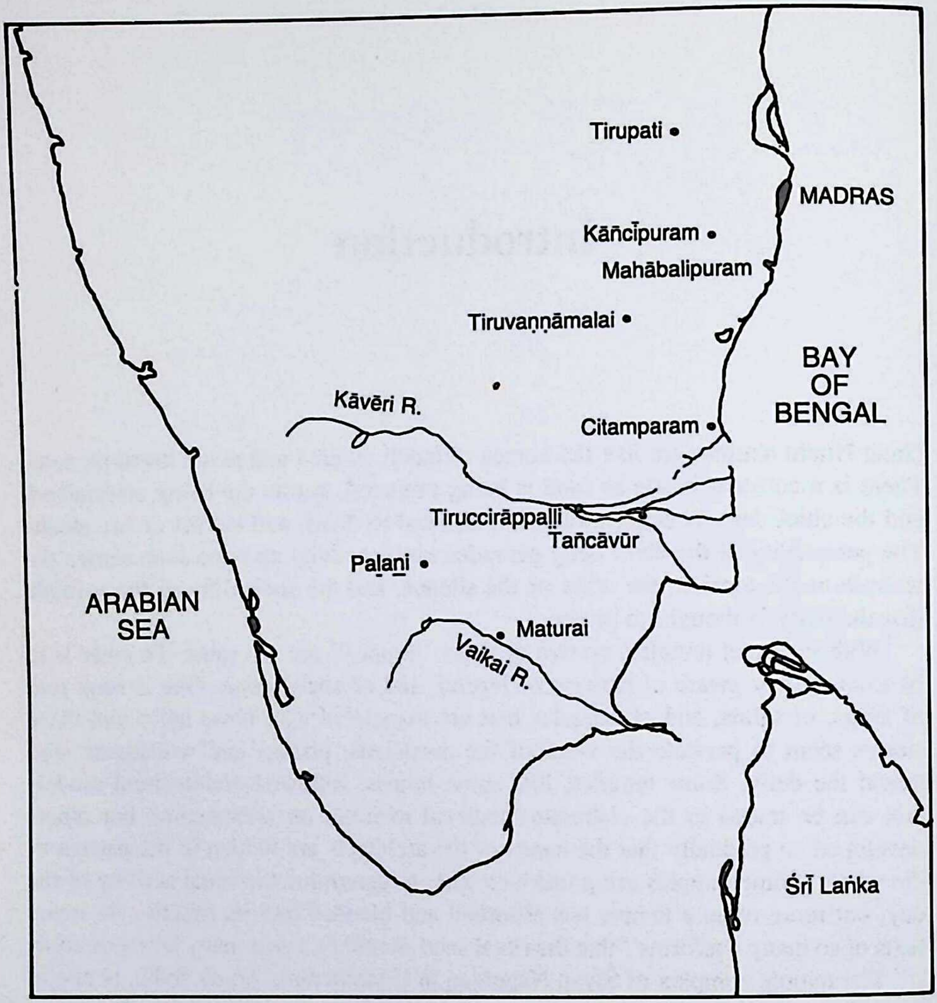
Introduction

Great Hindu temples are like the homes of much revered and much loved persons. There is a constant bustle as food is being prepared, guests are being entertained, and the chief deity is being awakened, allowed to dress, and eat his or her meals. The personality of the chief deity pervades every activity and one soon senses the warmth or the tension, the noise or the silence, and the sociability or the solitude that the deity is thought to prefer.

With the great temples, no two of these ‘‘homes’’ are the same. To enter is to be immediately aware of history, of legend, and of social class. One is soon told of kings, of saints, and of miracles that are associated with these halls, and these stories seem to pervade the work of the musicians, priests, and worshipers who attend the deity. Some temples, like some homes, followed architectural models that can be traced to the elaborate medieval manuals on architecture, but others developed so gradually that the hands of the architects are hidden in the pattern of the whole. Some temples use prescribed texts to determine the ritual activity of the day, but more often a temple has absorbed and blended into its tradition so many texts of so many ‘‘reforms’’ that the ritual used should be given many labels or none.

The temple complex of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ in Citamparam,[1] South India, is one of the truly great Hindu temples. Its history and legend are somewhat richer than most, but what makes it unique is that it is the only temple where the presiding deity is Śivaṉ in his dancing form. The *ānanda tāṇḍava* dance that Śivaṉ performs in Citamparam is a dance of joy, and the presence that the deity brings to the life of the Citamparam temple complex is pervaded with that joy. The present study is an attempt to understand the life of that temple complex in all its many facets.

The tradition of any important South Indian temple includes romantic stories of founding legends, royal donations, priestly quarrels, saintly devotion, and miraculous and satisfying encounters with the divine. The physical features of the temple complex usually reflect this tradition, and include a few halls or shrines of sculptural or architectural beauty, many less artistic halls, shrines, and walkways, as well as a few water reservoirs and sacred trees, each representing what some worshipers wanted to add to the tradition. Each physical feature tells its own story of past experience, and calls out to the worshiper or visitor to renew that aspect of the tradition in his or her final experience of meaning. The physical temple houses a complex human community, and most temples have a team of priests (or more


Tirupati
MADRAS
Kāñcīpuram
Mahābalipuram
Tiruvaṇṇāmalai
BAY OF BENGAL
Kāvēri R.
Citamparam
Tiruccirāppaḷḷi
Tañcāvūr
Paḻaṉi
ARABIAN SEA
Maturai
Vaikai R.
Śrī Laṅka

Map of South India

commonly a few teams of competing priestly groups), resident and visiting ascetics, people going into trance, musicians, cooks, lay committees of managers, prominent politicians or other notable adherents, pilgrim visitors, regular devotees, reformers and renovators, and high-caste and/or low-caste worshipers, each with their own tradition of the meaning of worshiping in this place. Hindu temple complexes often provide a central focus for the culture around them, not only by establishing a setting for religious experience, but also by including among its activities functions that other cultures might label familial, economic, political, or intellectual.

In recent years scholars have become more aware of the centrality of the temple in Indian society and culture, and more attention is now being paid to its functions in realms such as the economic or political.[2] A clear idea of just what all the functions of a Hindu temple complex are and how they work to effect the integration of the society has yet to emerge. Only when the history and sociology of a number of temples has been traced out with some care will it be possible to take up that larger task.

Reconstruction of the histories of some of the larger temple complexes of South India is a task that can now be accomplished with considerable confidence. Most of the empirical evidence needed for such a task is available. Art history has reached a stage where we can now determine with reasonable accuracy when most styles of sculpture and architecture were prevalent. The thousands of inscriptions on the temple walls are being systematically read, and they provide reliable dates and many details about the important donations made to the temples. Legend books, hymn books, and the biographies of saints provide rich interpretations of religious experience. Although these written sources were summarily dismissed by colonial historians as of no historical value, scholars have now learned to read them as revealing records of the age in which they were written. For most of the major temples these evidences are often sufficiently complete that, when they are combined together, they provide a more or less continuous story that stretches from the early centuries of the common era right down to the present.

The fact that a living tradition continues in most cases to carry on this history both enrichs and distorts the story. On the one hand the story is enriched in many ways because it is possible to discover rituals and priestly practices that unwittingly preserve the past, as well as schemes of interpretation that seek to carry on both the thought and practice of the past. On the other hand the priests and worshipers of the present sometimes have a great deal at stake in maintaining that the present ways of thinking and behaving are in exact conformity with the past, and in those cases the sense of change and variety one can naturally expect in a tradition is not something they are keen to take into account. In the end, if one functions as both an anthropologist observing the present and a historian looking for evidence of the past, one starts to find that the evidence from one source usually reinforces that from the other. The living traditions of the temples are deeply rooted in the past, and ritual activities one can observe today often call for explanations that are buried in the past. It is often with a set of questions that arose as one observed the traditions of worship as they are carried on today that one turns to the independent records of art history, inscription, and literature to gain an insight into the meaning of those traditions.

The temple complex in Citamparam was deeply involved in every aspect of South Indian history, and the priests and worshipers have developed a story of the temple's past that links it with most of the major saints and rulers of the area. These local traditions about the temple were generally consistent with the traditional histories and biographies of the area, and over the centuries the place the temple held in those larger traditions was widely acknowledged. The earliest hymnists knew the place as "Tillai," after the name of the shrub that grew in the forest where the temple was located. The famous saint Māṇikkavācakar from the relatively distant Maturai region is said to have heard of the temple and become restless until he was released from his government job and was able to go there for the remainder of his life. When the Cōḻa rulers started their empire they placed a gold shingled roof on the temple and began to use it as their spiritual home. Eventually the theologically significant name of "Citamparam"—"the Space [*amparam*] of Consciousness [*cit*]"—(Sanskrit: "Cidambaram") came to be used, but late medieval poets came more and more to speak of the temple simply by the generic name "*Kōyil*" or the "The Temple," as if it were the model for the thousands of other temples in the region.

From the early centuries of the common era right through the eighteenth century there was an abundance of acceptable evidence indicating how the temple tradition understood itself and what place it held in the history of the region. In the nineteenth century, however, a new, colonially inspired, style of historiography was introduced into India by British historians, and the story of South India's past was altered in ways that dramatically affected the story of Citamparam. The new historiography did not concern itself with temple traditions as such. Nevertheless, by dismissing completely the chronologies established in the temple traditions, by focusing on a few militarily notable rulers, and by redefining the religious history as a story of "reform" on the model of the Catholic-Protestant history of Europe, the new historiography created an altogether different story of what took place in South India. As a result, the temple traditions were sometimes characterized as confused and mistaken about events that they thought were central to the story of their past. Having adopted this kind of historiography, some scholars at the turn of the century were willing to dismiss temple traditions altogether as sources for reliable historical evidence, and were prepared to present Hinduism in terms of its "classical" and "modern" periods as if there were little but an era of darkness in between. Scholars have since come step by step to alter this judgment, and to value the traditions of South India for both their richness and continuity, but the challenge of finding the best ways to utilize the evidence of the tradition in establishing a reliable history remains.

It is not possible in a work about one temple tradition to go into all the ramifications of colonial historiography, but it is necessary to figure out how to deal with the many controversies which that historiography has stirred up within the tradition of this temple. Many of the articles and books written about Citamparam in the recent past have been preoccupied with one or another of these controversies.[3] Alternate dates for many of the saints have been suggested; the religious initiatives of the court have been shifted from one king and one century to another; the traditional sequences in which various reforms were undertaken and various buildings within the temple complex were thought to have been set in place have been challenged; and the role of the priests in each stage of the development has been questioned. Looked at in isolation each of these controversies seems difficult to resolve, and one gets the overall impression that the temple tradition might be in considerable disarray. When looked at in the overall context of the many datable inscriptions and the uncontested historical evidence for dozens of royal building projects and saints' visits, however, the controversies over the dates of a few saints and a few building projects seem more and more tangential, while the main outline of the temple tradition is supported by a wide variety of reliable sources.

In this study, therefore, we will not begin with the controversies stirred up by the historiography of the past century, but we will first of all attempt to allow the evidence from different aspects of the temple tradition to speak for itself. We will begin with the living traditions of worship as they take place in the temple today. We will then examine the three hundred inscriptions on the temple walls and seek to determine from them, and from the evidence of art history, when the many parts of the temple were constructed and what innovations in the worship tradition they made possible. Using the inscriptions and the abundant literature about the temple, we should then be able to take up the complex historical questions of what role the famous kings and saints of the region played in the life of the temple.

Finally, it is necessary to explain why this account of the Citamparam temple tradition is being presented as six separate ''stories.'' In conducting the research for this study it gradually became obvious that there were three different kinds of evidence involved. First of all, there were the living traditions of worship within the temple. The priests of the temple were very open to describing both their ritual duties and their management procedures, and both priests and worshipers were willing to discuss what the worship tradition meant to them. This ''fieldwork'' experience was much more rewarding than I had anticipated, and in some ways the tradition as I see it is very much a product of the directions in which my priestly and lay informants led me. Second, there were the buildings themselves. One can learn an enormous amount from the buildings in a place like Citamparam where dozens of building projects were spread over many centuries. In this inquiry one works partly as a kind of archaeologist trying to decide what was built after what; partly as an art historian linking the different structures with well-known art traditions; and partly as an epigraphist reading through the three hundred inscriptions and associating them with the different structures and with the known events and personalities of South Indian history. This is slow and sometimes tedious work, but when the puzzle comes together in the end a very reliable history starts to emerge. The third kind of evidence the tradition made available was literature. There were two legend books specifically about the temple, dozens of hymns inspired by the temple, and many saintly biographies for which the temple provides the major setting. Some of this literature is rich and beautiful in its own right, and some of it has been studied by scholars interested in questions of biography or theology that do not center on Citamparam, but all of it is central to the historian who wants to understand the temple's tradition, and it needed to be combed through with that question in view.

Investigating each of these three different kinds of evidence eventually led me—in each case to a couple of different lines of inquiry—one line of inquiry into a feature of the tradition that was unavoidable, and one into a more contextual matter that gave the temple tradition its place in the larger arena of South Indian society. The study of the worship traditions led inevitably into an examination of the daily routines and the legendary priesthood of the temple that carries on the daily rituals, but it also led to a wider study of the society living in the region around the temple and the many different classes of lay devotees who normally would not enter the temple but whose religious longings have been expressed in the richly textured festival traditions associated with Citamparam. The examination of the building led unavoidably to an inquiry into the many different structures and their respective functions, but reading the inscriptions on the walls of the temple also led to a more contextual inquiry into the donors involved in both the building and maintenance of the temple, and the social and political changes in society that their donations reflected. And, finally, the study of the literature led to an unavoidable inquiry into the unusual legend books written for the use of the worshipers at the temple, and then to the frequent references to the temple in the famous hymn traditions of South Indian Śaivism, which required an inquiry into the religious and theological interests of the important saints linked with the temple.

Each of these inquiries led to a "story," which seemed to hold together best when allowed to stand on its own. Each of the six stories to be presented here represents a set of self-consciously related changes in one aspect of the temple tradition. The priests carefully seek to link themselves and their ritual traditions with the legendary Mūvāyiravar ascetics who are supposed to have established the temple. Each builder has to take into account the buildings that are already there and has to add to that story of the tradition with a careful eye on the builders who have already spoken. In a similar way donors know the reputations of those who already have their names inscribed on the walls before them, and hymnists probably often knew by heart the hymns of their predecessors. The legend books and the festivals represent more complex forms of tradition building in that they operate at a more "popular" level and are giving summary expression to a great diversity of social and religious symbolism, but there too the sense of an accumulating store of symbols developing over time and carefully responding to the preexisting storehouse can also be seen. Where there are links between stories we will, of course, attempt to point them out, but our focus will be on letting the voices of the tradition speak in the self-consciously formed patterns that are used as a tradition evolves. It is my hope that these six "stories" will allow you to hear those voices.

In the telling of each of the six "stories" an attempt will be made to focus on both the *persons* who initiated change and the *tradition* that took up the initiative and wove it into the larger story. Humanistic studies have tended to focus on the poets, saints, or others involved in the genesis of culture, while cultural anthropology has focused more on the product that results over time. By incorporating both of these emphases in the same story I am hoping that we will be able to present a sense of the religious tradition as a living system of communication in which certain individuals experience the divine and express their wonder and joy in a way that allows others to then share in that experience as they participate in the tradition thus created.[4]

The six "stories" connected with the Citamparam temple complex I will be telling are the following: the story of the special priestly community that carries on the daily ritual activities inside the temple; the story of the worshipers who live in the region around and know the deity of the temple almost exclusively through the festival celebrations of the temple complex; the story of the various builders and the physical structures they put up; the story of the kings, landlords, and others who made donations and wrote inscriptions on the walls; the story of the legend writers who set out the oral and written traditions associated with the temple; and the story of the hymnists, saints, and theologians for whom the temple served as a focus of religious life.

In presenting these six different "stories" from the tradition of the Citamparam temple complex, I as the author will be tending to treat them as separate stories about priests, festivals, art, inscriptions, *tala purāṇas*, and saints, even though I will be very aware that they have for centuries become part of a mysteriously integrated temple tradition. I presume that a few readers will like the separateness of the individual studies and the clearer account of the evidence in each area that can be provided in this way, but I suspect that most readers will—like a worshiper in the temple—blend it all into a common story of "what goes on in Citamparam" and focus on the overall spirit of the tradition rather than on the specific historical evidence in each area. This difference between the perspective of the author and the reader is informative, for it reflects, I think, the communication system of Citamparam where priests, worshipers, builders, kings, poets, and saints each spoke with specific intentions and structures of thought in mind, and where their ideas were received into a more dynamic and flexible thought process in the ongoing temple tradition. It is in trying to discern how distinguishable thought structures are blended together in the formation of a temple tradition that we will learn what it was that made the Hindu temple such a flexible and enduring "center" for Indian society.

Notes

1. The letter "ṉ" at the end of commonly used names such as Śivaṉ and Naṭarājaṉ (the honorific ending "r" is sometimes used instead of the "ṉ" in the case of Naṭarājaṉ), is the Tamiḻ ending for these names, and serves as a reminder that this book is a study of religion in a Tamiḻ-speaking region. Sometimes common usage in Tamiḻnāṭu involves a combining of Sanskrit and Tamiḻ. In the names Śivaṉ and Naṭarājaṉ, for instance, the "Ś" and the "j" are Sanskrit letters that are usually retained in Tamiḻ spelling and pronunciation of these names. (The more strictly Tamiḻ spellings would be Civaṉ and Naṭarācaṉ.)

2. The literature is vast and need not all be cited here. A good collection of essays by some of the best scholars taking this approach is found in Burton Stein 1978.

3. The extant literature on Citamparam is not very great considering the importance of the temple.

The first modern study was Srinivasachari 1941. Balasubrahmanyan (1943, 1944) did some original work on the inscriptions. The next study was Ramakrishnan Aiyer 1946. Somasundaram (1955) 1963 is a generally reliable, but incomplete and poorly organized study.

Harle 1963 is a good art history of the *kōpurams*, but is less reliable with regard to the wider history and tradition of the temple complex. Ramalinga 1965 is an M. A. thesis, Annamalai University. Kulke 1970 is a thorough study of the Sanskrit legend book of the temple. Natarajan 1974 repeats the evidence of Somasundaram in a more readable form. Satyamurti 1978 is a standard art history. Balasubrahmanyam 1979 makes only a few offhand suggestions about the history of the temple, but does translate the long inscription of Nāralōkavīraṉ on the remodeling of the temple. Swamy (1979) presents a number of radical hypotheses about the history of the temple which have not won wide acceptance, but are in a way interesting and suggestive. Loud 1990 is a Ph.D. thesis from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Many other works discuss the temple from a single perspective. On Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ, see Tesikar 1967 Sivaramamurti 1974. On dance and religion, see Gaston 1982. On Śaiva history, see Zvelebil 1985.

4. I am indebted to Jurgen Habermas (1979) for some dimensions of this understanding of society and culture.

I

Worship

The story of the Citamparam temple must begin with an account of the worship that takes place there. This sacred spot on the southeast coast of India has been a place of worship now for almost two millennia. Tradition says that the first worshiper was a wandering ascetic from North India who was looking for the most difficult place on earth where he might worship. He was told that the milky sap from broken branches of the *tillai* shrub was poisonous, and so he courageously entered what was then a thick forest of *tillai* shrubs and found a pond beside which to worship. Among those who eventually joined him was an exiled prince from Bengal, and the prince was so delighted with the place that he lured a whole company of three thousand religious specialists to the spot and built them a temple where they could carry on their special forms of worship. According to tradition, that worship tradition is still being carried on in Citamparam.[1]

For almost fifteen centuries now hymn writers have sung about the wondrous worship traditions of Citamparam. People who have never visited the temple know that its priests do ''vedic sacrifices,'' and that the image of Dancing Śivaṉ is carried about and bathed in the cool morning air at festival time. The thatch-styled wooden hut in which the deity resides is replicated in other temples, and the simple beauty of that structure evokes reverence in all who hear its praises sung.

The religious community residing at this famous temple site is now called the Dīṭcitars (Sanskrit: Dīkṣitas), and it claims to carry on the worship traditions of its ancestors, the famous Three Thousand or Mūvāyiravar. In the daily worship this means that there are six times each day that elaborate rituals are performed in the presence of the image of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ. The performance of these rituals today seems very similar, indeed, to the ritual performances of the Mūvāyiravar as they were described in the fourteenth century.[2] During the daily ritual, the two hundred members of the Dīṭcitar community who are initiated priests go about their different ritual duties in accord with their traditions, and the clusters of worshipers who follow the priests about watch quietly as the many elegant ceremonies are carried out.

At festival times the tone of the worship changes drastically. The Dīṭcitars are still involved, but the image of the deity is taken into the streets of the city, and for ten days the tone of worship is governed by the joyous activity of the vast crowds that come from far and near and from all sectors of society. Again fourteenth century texts confirm that these forms of worship have changed very little,[3] but the crowds of worshipers act as if the festival were a celebration that they themselves have arranged for the enjoyment of the deity.

The first story about life in the Citamparam temple has to be about the religious community that lives there. This is not an easy story to tell because skeptical visitors to the temple have always wondered if the young priests there could really be direct descendents of the famous Mūvāyiravar, or if their rituals could have been carried out in the same way for many hundreds of years. Our task will not be to examine those claims as such, but to allow the legendary past to help us better understand the present-day community and its beautiful pattern of daily worship.

The second story about life in Citamparam will be about the vast crowds that mill about the temple at festival time. The social history of this region has certainly changed over the years, but the system for raising rice in irrigated paddies has been much the same for many centuries, and the roles the different social classes play at festival time are not hard to make out. The symbolism of the many festival activities follows a popular logic, which escapes even the Dīṭcitars much of the time, but the activities are carried on faithfully year after year, and there are clues in older hymns and legends that help explain the meaning of what is taking place. The excitement and reverence that finally combine to bring the festival worship to a climax is in any case unmistakable, and an experience any human being would feel comfortable being a part of.

Notes

1. See Story 5 for detailed accounts of these legends.

2. The fourteenth-century hymn Śrī Kuñcitāṅghristavaḥ by the temple priest Umāpati Śivācārya refers to many details of the daily ritual.

3. The legend book *Kōyil Purāṇa* also by Umāpati provides a detailed account of the major festivals.

Story 1

The Priests and the Daily Ritual

The Dīṭcitars of Citamparam are an unusual religious community. They are an endogamous community of about a thousand members. The two hundred married males among them have undergone a five-stage initiation so that they can serve as priests of Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲. The two hundred priests meet as a democratic body that owns and manages the temple, and they carry out the elaborate ritual traditions connected with the worship of Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲.[1] The traditions they carry on reach back to at least the middle of the first millennium when hymn writers began to sing about the special priesthood and the special worship traditions of the place.

The Heritage

To understand this unusual religious community we might be wise to begin with a sense of the legendary heritage to which it seeks to be faithful. The earliest Śaiva hymns available in South India come from the period between the fifth and the eighth centuries. Each of the four hymnists of this period arrived at the temple having already heard of the legendary religious community known as the Three Thousand or Mūvāyiravar, which lived and worshiped in a place then called "Tillai."

Māṇikkavācakar is the most revered saint of Tamil̲ Śaivism,[2] and in his hymns there are frequent references to the community that he found worshiping at the feet of Dancing Śivan̲ when he left his position as minister in the court of Maturai and retired to a life of meditation in Citamparam. In closing the opening hymn of the *Tiruvācakam* collection he refers to this worshiping community as follows:

> The Holy Ones who dwell in Śivan̲'s town bend low before the feet of Śivan̲ singing praises.[3] (I)

And then in the next hymn, which is very autobiographical, he describes his arrival in Citamparam:

> He asked me, a dog, to draw near to the Glorious Company of Devotees in Tillai, and now he allows me to stay here.
>
> This is the place where his Slaves, who had been chosen to go with him, found themselves declared to be one with him.[4] (II)

In subsequent hymns, when he describes the wonders of the Dancing Image and the Little Hall where the dance is held, he frequently includes references to the community of worshipers:

> I have seen him in the Little Hall in Tillai where the Great Company worships.
>
> . . . .
>
> I have seen his form in the temple hall at Tillai where all bow down.
>
> . . . .
>
> I have seen him, the pure nectar, in Tillai where the Holy Ones live.
>
> . . . .
>
> I have seen him in shining Tillai where the Vedas are heard in the worship. (XXXI)

Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar are the three itinerant Śaiva hymn singers who are generally agreed to have lived in the seventh and eighth centuries, and their references to the religious community residing in Citamparam are even more explicit than Māṇikkavācakar's. Appar, for instance, refers to the community's ability to perform sacrifices, its reputation for sagelike sacred knowledge, its abject devotion to the feet of Śivaṉ, its luxurious dwellings, and its skill at esoteric feats:

> When you dance both night and day in the Little Hall, where sacrifices are performed by those who do fine sacrifices, do not your feet become exhausted? . . .[5] (II.4)
>
> The Antaṇar [Sages] who have the blessing of final bliss dwell in Tillai. . . (III.2)
>
> Tillai is inhabited by those who entertain in their mind his red lotus feet. . . . (III.9)
>
> Those who are well versed in the Vedas, and even the gods themselves, receive boons from the Little Hall at Tillai where the Antaṇar [Sages] live in prosperity. . . . (V.6)
>
> The Cittar [Yogis] live in Tillai where the Lord dances in the Hall. (VI.3)

The references in Campantar are similar to those of Appar, but he provides a better sense of the group's ritual duties:

> He is the one who presides in the Little Hall of Tillai where the Antaṇar [Sages] do the Pacu Sacrifice and establish sacrificial altars everywhere. . . .[6] (I.2)
>
> In Tillai where live the wealthy whose luxurious tall mansions rise high in the sky toward the prosperous moon; . . . (I.5)
>
> . . . in the Little Hall of Tillai where live the Antaṇar [Sages]. . . . (I.9)
>
> Worship always the Dancing Lord presiding in the Little Hall of Tillai where dwell the Cittar [Yogis]. . . . (I.10)
>
> You sought as your abode the Little Hall which the Antaṇar never leave,[7] and there you are bathed in clarified butter, milk, and curds. . . . (II.1)
>
> The holy Antaṇar of Tillai never leave the Little Hall, and with joy you reside there too. (II.2)

Cuntarar defines the temple in Citamparam as the place where this special community lives when he says repeatedly:

> He is the Lord of the Little Hall in Tigertown[8] where the Antaṇar reside. . . .[9]

Cuntarar also uses the specific name of the community, "The Three Thousand" (Mūvāyiravar), when he says:

> He is said to be the image-presence for the Mūvāyiravar [Three Thousand] when they do the ritual three times each day without fail. (I.7)

It is Cuntarar who also wrote down the first list of the sixty-three canonical saints, and after a crisis of confidence in starting suddenly said of himself *tillai vāl antaṇar tam aṭiyārkkum aṭiyēn*—"I am the servant of the servants, the Antaṇar who dwell in Tillai"[10]—and placed the whole priestly community of Citamparam jointly as the first entry in the list of saints.

These references to the community in the early hymns are interesting, among other reasons, because they clearly indicate that the special religious community of Citamparam was well known long before the Cōḻa kings started their empire in the ninth century. In Stories 3 and 4 we will discuss the many contacts the priestly community had with the Cōḻa kings and the role the Cōḻas had in the building programs at the temple. At this point in our story it is only important to note how the actions of the different Cōḻa rulers at Citamparam affected the life of the already well known priesthood of the temple.

The great conqueror of the Early Cōḻas was Ātitya I, who, when he finished his conquest of the Kāvēri River valley and the Koṅku plateau brought the gold collected in his conquest and had a gold shingled roof put on the shrine of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ in Citamparam. The copperplate statements about that donation do not mention the priestly reaction,[11] but a well-known legend of another initiative Ātitya took at the temple would seem to indicate that his efforts to gain political legitimacy by being associated with this revered priestly community could not be taken for granted. According to this well-known story the emperor went with the court scholar Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi to collect the hymns of Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar and edit them. Because the official manuscripts of the hymns were housed in the temple at Citamparam, they had to get them from the priests there, and the priests for some time seemed to hesitate in spite of the presence of the emperor.[12] When we discuss this legend later in Story 6 we will speculate on why the priests might have refused for a time to give their copy of the hymns to Nampi, but the fact that they even temporarily stood up to the great founding emperor of the Cōḻa Empire tells us a lot about their status at the time.

The awe in which the Early Cōḻas held the Citamparam priesthood is confirmed by the fact that Ātitya's grandson, Kaṇṭarātitya, the third of the Early Cōḻa rulers, wrote a beautiful hymn about the temple in which he made detailed references to the reputation of the community of priests resident there.

> The Antaṇar [Sages] there tend the three-tiered fire, perform the Five Sacrifices, know the Six Limbs and the Four Vedas, do the Pacu Sacrifice, and raise up the oblations. They total three thousand, and you, O Lord, stand with them on the front platform of your hall!
>
> . . . .
>
> The Mūvāyiravar [Three Thousand] who tend the three-tiered fire and the Four Vedas have as their nature that they live along with you, and their recitation of the Four Vedas is like the sound of bees.[13]

The ties between the Early Cōḻa rulers and the Citamparam priesthood were temporarily broken when Rājarāja I and Rājēndra I built royal temples near their palaces and brought in priests from North India to staff them. This experiment did not seem to work well, however, and in 1070 a new ruler, Kulōttuṅka I, took the Cōḻa family's religious affiliation back to Citamparam and undertook a major building program there. His successors went even further and built a royal audience hall on the temple grounds at Citamparam and often ruled from there.

Evidence that the priestly community continued on with its legendary ritual traditions in spite of the ups and downs of the political tie with the Cōḻas comes from the fact that the twelfth-century court poet, Cēkkiḻār, when he wrote his elaborate version of the canonical saints' lives, described the community living at Citamparam as follows:

> In this much-adored Tillai live the Antaṇar whose greatness is to be covered with ash because of their service to the one who has taken the form of a dancer. Their worth is without limit because they live only to perform service to the holy feet and their value is only in that love.
>
> (3)
>
> They serve with joy in that beautiful temple, concentrating on the duties assigned to each. In accord with the Vedic scriptures they do all forms of auspicious service and undertake the rituals with a beauty that increases holiness.
>
> (4)
>
> They tend the three-tiered fire in the ancient way so that souls may prosper and be filled with grace; they understand *dharma* to be their only wealth. They are learned in the Four Vedas and the Six Limbs, and are competent in every way. Their excellence is that they have been chosen to be the servants of the one who does the holy dance.
>
> (5)
>
> They come from an impeccable lineage. Their conduct is unwavering in the performance of the six functions [learning and teaching the scriptures, understanding and conducting the sacrifices, and giving and receiving gifts]. They have warded off the Age of Darkness. They look on adornment with ash as their only wealth. They live prosperously, counting as their greatest blessing their love for Śivaṉ.
>
> (6)
>
> Knowing faultlessly the four parts of the *Ākamam* (Sanskrit: *Āgama) [Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga, Jñāna*], they are equally adept at sharing wealth and practicing austerity. They live as householders, and practice tolerance and sensitivity. Being fit for their task, they are free from sin hereafter.
>
> (7)
>
> There are three thousand of these divine vedic *brāhmaṇas,* who with a gentle manner live even now along with god. They have nothing to await in the hereafter. Their greatness and status can be measured only by comparison with themselves.
>
> (8)
>
> May all the world revere the Antaṇar of world-famous Tillai, and may those who possess the secret knowledge ever live the life of adoration before the dance![14]
>
> (10)

Cōḻa rule began to unravel in the thirteenth century and the religious community of Citamparam again had to stand on its own reputation.[15] The community never again had close political contacts as it had under the Cōlas, but the tradition it represented was too important to be ignored by political leaders, and over the years a number of political leaders made decisions that resulted in seriously threatening the priestly tradition.

One of the first challenges came even while the last of the Cōlas was still on the throne. During the middle of the thirteenth century real political power in the Citamparam area was in the hands of a local ruler named Kōpperuñciṅkan. Kōpperuñciṅkan claimed to be of the ancient Pallava family that had an empire in the area four centuries earlier, and he and his minister Cōlakōn tried to run the temple in Citamparam on a day-to-day basis. We will leave until Story 3 a detailed discussion of his different building projects, but we need to note here the way in which all his activities could be interpreted as a threat to the worship traditions of the priests. His two most important building projects were to place a small *liṅkam* (Sanskrit: *liṅga*) shrine in the second corridor of the temple and to move Kāḷi (Sanskrit: Kālī) worship out of the temple to a small shrine outside the town's northern boundary.[16] These two projects were intended to bring the local worship traditions of Citamparam more into line with the all-Indian patterns of Śaiva orthodoxy as they were being defined in the thirteenth century. *Liṅkam*s were more common than anthropomorphic images in Śaiva temples by the mid-thirteenth century, and Kāḷi worship, which involved offerings of meat and liquor, was being frowned on. Even more directly threatening to the religious community of Citamparam was the fact that Kōpperuñciṅkan also hired some families of North Indian Brāhmaṇas to recite the Veda and to carry out certain rituals at festival time.[17] There is no hint in either inscriptions or literature of the period that he actually tried to replace the traditional priesthood, but it is hard to imagine that they would not have perceived his many initiatives as a threat to their traditions.[18]

A second and more dramatic threat to the worship traditions of the religious community of Citamparam occurred in 1539 when Acyuta I, one of the Vicayanakaram (Sanskrit: Vijayanagara) rulers who ruled the whole of South India at the time, ordered that a Viṣṇu temple with its own priests be built right inside the walls of the Citamparam temple and just to the south of the Little Hall of Dancing Śivan (*ARE* 1913, 272; *ARE* 1915, 1). One can imagine the priestly opposition at the time, but real evidence of opposition comes a bit later in 1597 when the hallways of the Viṣṇu temple were being expanded and a Jesuit priest named Father Pimento was visiting the temple and reported that

> the priests of the temple, who were also the treasurers, stood against him [the Nāyak governor who ordered the expansion] and threatened to throw themselves down from the towers. The Smārta Brāhmaṇas working in the temple swore they would do likewise after performing the funerals of the others. . . . About twenty perished in that way.[19]

If the sixteenth-century challenge to the priests required heroism, the eighteenth-century challenge required a more diverse set of survival techniques. By the end of the seventeenth century the armies of the militant Mughal ruler Aurangzeb had reached South India and the Hindu temples of the area felt threatened. Soon the

British and French armies also began using the area to test their strength, and they each made alliances with various Hindu and Muslim armies. The walled temples of the area provided ready-made fortresses for the various armies, and the daily routines of temple life were exceedingly difficult to maintain. We know something about the situation in Citamparam during this period because a manuscript in the collection of Colonel MacKenzie, which would have been picked up early in the nineteenth century, describes in considerable detail what was happening at the Citamparam temple through the war years. The manuscript divides the century into six distinct periods in which the fortunes of the priesthood (now called Dīṭcitars for the first time) went up and down as new armies arrived, but argues that throughout "*pūjas* [daily worship] and festivals were conducted properly." It then adds that for eighty years [we know from other sources that the period ended in 1773] half of the priests had gone to the temple of Tiruvārūr where they kept one of the images of Dancing Śivaṉ hidden under a tamarind tree for safekeeping.[20] Although Citamparam almost certainly would have often had armies in its outer corridors during this century, there is no evidence of a major break in the worship tradition.[21]

Finally, the fourth threat to the priestly community of Citamparam comes in the present time from the new forces in the politics of Tamiḻnāṭu. The central problem of modern Tamiḻ politics is usually described as the "Brāhmaṇa problem" in that it starts with the fact that the people now called the "Smārta Brāhmaṇas," who had been placed in special villages or *brahmadēyas* by the medieval kings, quickly took advantage of opportunities for English education and by the end of the nineteenth century held a preponderance of the jobs in the British civil service. The traditional landlord castes fought back by organizing the anti-Brāhmaṇa political forces, which have tended to dominate Tamiḻ politics ever since. Using the system of government management of temples introduced by the British, the various anti-Brāhmaṇa governments of Tamiḻnāṭu have, since Independence in 1947, been able to reassure themselves that the "Smārta Brāhmaṇas" do not have control of the temples. The situation in Citamparam, however, is an irritant to these government officials in that the priestly community there owns and manages the temple and the government has no authority over the priests. Although the Dīṭcitar community is not really Smārta Brāhmaṇa either in the sense of having come into the area in medieval times or of residing in a *brahmadēya*, the government chose to challenge the idea of any "Brāhmaṇas" owning and managing a temple. In 1954 and again in 1981 the government took the Dīṭcitar community to court to challenge its right to own this temple, but on both occasions the traditions of the community were upheld by the courts.[22]

The heritage of the Dīṭcitar community is thus a story of illustrious glory and precarious survival. The community is in awe of its legendary past and is anxious that its worship traditions remain faithful to those described in the hymns of the past, but it is also aware of the challenges of each day and the difficulties involved in sustaining such an elaborate worship tradition as the society around continues to change. We will next have to examine the regulations by which the community functions today.

Management

The Dīṭcitar community owns and manages the temple in Citamparam. Because this practice is unique to this temple, it is not surprising that the government felt it should be tested in the courts. What the courts found in both 1954 and 1981, however, was not only that the reputation of the religious community has been special throughout the centuries, but that the management system of the community is also a very old tradition[23] and follows a set of highly unusual regulations built around the principle of equality. These ancient democratic practices of management used by the community were enough to convince the courts that the community constituted what the courts called ''a separate denomination'' and that it should be allowed to continue to manage the temple.[24]

The underlying management principle in the ancient regulations the priests use is what might be called an enforced democracy.[25] All 195 males eligible to serve as priests are members of the assembly known as the *Potu Dīṭcitars* or ''Community of Initiated''[26] of the Śrī Sabhānayakar[27] temple of Citamparam. Once a year at a regular meeting of the assembly of priests, nine priests are chosen at random and are designated as the ''committee'' for the year. Among these nine the first name pulled out becomes the ''secretary'' and the second ''vice-secretary,'' and these two are quite busy throughout the year representing the community in all dealings with the public. Regular meetings of the whole assembly are held at twenty-day intervals, and the secretary brings the important management problems to the group at that time.

The income of the priests is all through a system of *kaṭṭalais* or endowments that are carefully regulated. Some very large *kaṭṭalais* have been in place for centuries and involve substantial provisions of the large quantities of *ghee* or clarified butter and rice used in the worship. These endowments are maintained by some of the wealthy *maṭams*, and by families of Mutaliyār landlords and the Rāja of Ceṭṭināṭu, and they are arranged for through the management committee. Individual Dīṭcitars also have clients in kaṭṭalai relationships. In these situations the priest says a prayer for the person on their birthday or other important day, and sends the holy ash used in that worship to the client. The client in turn makes a regular payment or *kaṭṭalai* to the priest. When these clients are able to come and worship, they are met by their ''*kaṭṭalai dīṭcitar*'' and, in a leisurely visit to the different shrines, are carefully led through the worship routines. Worshipers who arrive at the temple and do not have a *kaṭṭalai dīṭcitar* are led to the southwest corner of the porch in front of the central shrine where four priests have been designated for each day to assist such visitors with their worship. After assisting them with their worship these priests are encouraged to establish client relations with these worshipers, and to send them holy ash (*vipūti*) and serve as their *kaṭṭalai dīṭcitar* in the future.

The Dīṭcitars are very proud of their system of management and are quick to contrast it with the arrangements found at other large temples. The contrasts that are most obvious to the ordinary worshiper have to do with the form of offering. Right at the entrance of a government-managed temple is the *huṇḍial* or huge steel offering box, and nearby are the wickets where one buys tickets for entrance to various shrines and for special priestly services. The Dīṭcitars mock these arrangements as "cinema admissions" and carefully discourage any kind of commercial transaction with worshipers in the temple. Clients make payment either by mail or when saying goodbye to their Dīṭcitar host as they leave the temple. Using this traditional system probably limits the income of the Dīṭcitars in recent years because worshipers have become accustomed to the other system and in some of the "popular" temples the offerings in the *huṇḍials* include large quantities of gold as well as currency. The system does, however, provide the priests with a steady income, and also gives them an important and direct spiritual as well as material tie with each person who temporarily joins the worship community at the temple.

While the difference in offerings provides an obvious contrast between Citamparam and other large temples, the more important difference in management would seem to be that in the other temples of Tamil̲nāṭu the ownership and management of the temple have always been in the hands of a committee of laypersons (usually landlords or people appointed by a ruler), and the priests were invited by that committee to serve in the temple. In practice in many of the larger temples the priests are proud of old copperplate contracts giving them a formal "right" to serve as the priests of that temple "as long as the sun and moon endure." Nevertheless, the members of the lay committees are the ones who speak of themselves as the "owners" of the temple, and they are totally responsible for worship supplies, repair work, and similar decisions. Starting in the 1920s the state government in the area began taking over the management of the largest temples and the lay committees in those cases are now headed by government paid "managers."[28]

It would be hard to determine just how old the management practices now used at Citamparam are. The Cōl̲a era inscriptions refer to committees that seem to include nonpriestly members, so one would be justified in assuming that the arrangements have changed from time to time. Nevertheless the priestly community of Citamparam has always had a prominent role in everything that went on at the temple, and in one form or another that probably included being responsible for the finances of the temple.

Ritual Duties

In addition to being equal in the responsibilities of management, each of the Dīṭcitars is also given an equal share in the ritual duties. In order to ensure that the shares are equal, an elaborate system of drawing names for different ritual assignments is used. At each of the twenty day meetings, twenty names are first chosen to provide officiating priests for the five major shrines of the temple complex, twenty more names are chosen for the ten minor shrines, and twenty more to be on hand to make offerings for worshipers who arrive and are not already clients of one of the Dīṭcitars, with various others to serve guard duty and other tasks. Even within this scheme the group of twenty appointed for the worship on the five major shrines is broken up into five groups of four, which rotate from shrine to shrine at four-day intervals, and the twenty assigned to the ten minor shrines are in groups of two, which rotate at two-day intervals. All of this rotation of duties is to ensure that no one gains the prestige of remaining for a long time at the main shrine (each Dīṭcitar ends up serving the main image about three times a year), or of being in charge for more than a few days of the vast collections of jewels associated with particular images. The most important of all the random selections comes up just twice a year when, on the first day of each of the two major festivals, a name is drawn to determine the person who will serve as head priest of the festival. This selection is from a pool of those who have never served before, and is therefore a once-in-a-lifetime honor that comes to the priest just hours before his duties begin.

The rigidity of these regulations reinforcing equality in the opportunities for priestly service is explained today by the Dīṭcitars as a way to manifest the wonder of their being chosen by Śivaṉ for service in his presence. It is in this context that they tend to recount the incident when their legendary forebears, the Three Thousand, were being counted and only 2,999 could be found until Śivaṉ himself spoke up saying he was the final one and he was "one with them." In the priestly retelling of this story the emphasis, surprisingly, is not on the greatness of the priests who are declared one with God, but on their equality and the uniqueness of the service they are expected to render.

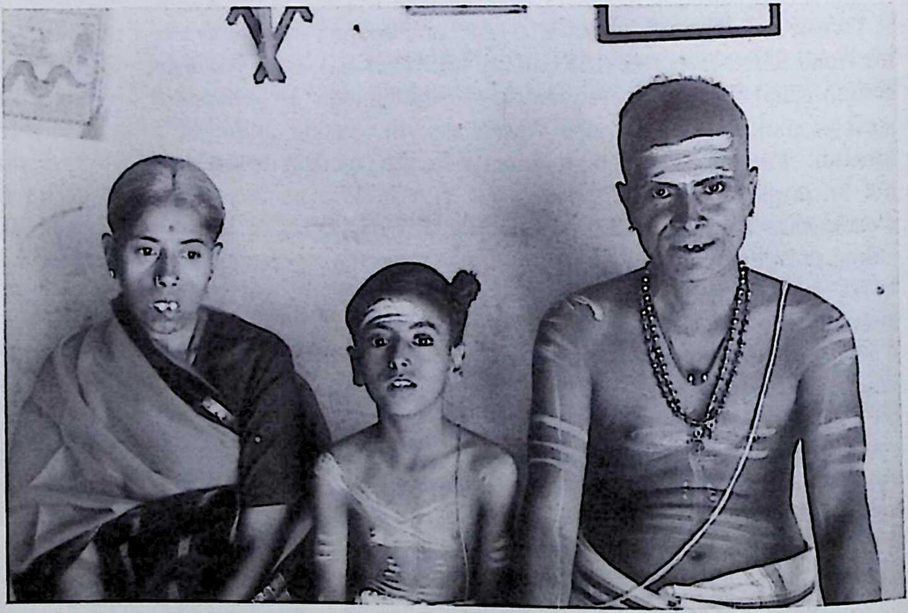
The result of these arrangements for distributing ritual duties is that each of the priests has an intimate knowledge of the worship patterns of each part of the temple, and each has a great deal of contact with all other members of the community. The priests with their distinctive physical features and special hairdo (in which the front forehead is shaved and the rest of the hair tied on the left of the head) can be seen constantly moving about the temple on their various duties. In the course of this movement they themselves carefully worship at the various shrines around the temple, and many engage in extensive forms of personal recitation or meditation, which set an example to others who come to worship in the temple.[29]

While the Dīṭcitar priests who own and operate the temple carry out most of the ritual themselves, they do employ two other classes of *brāhmaṇas* to carry out certain ritual functions. They employ a few families of *brāhmaṇas* who do tasks such as cooking, handling the vessels used in worship, and cleaning up the inner sanctum. These jobs are a bit too menial for the Dīṭcitars themselves, but they could not be done by a *non-brāhmaṇa* for they involve an important level of ritual cleanliness. They also employ five families of Aiyars or traditional high-status "Smārta Brāhmaṇas" of the region in order to carry out certain specialized chanting in the temple and to perform all the domestic rites in the homes of the priestly community.[30]

The relationship of the Dīṭcitars and the Aiyars or Smārta Brāhmaṇas they employ for certain ritual functions needs to be explained carefully. In the minds of the Dīṭcitars the most important of the rites carried out by the Aiyars are those connected with the ancestors of the priestly community. On the occasion of the death anniversary of the father and grandfather, and on a general anniversary for all other ancestors, these Aiyars, who are called either "Śāstrikaḷ" or "Vāttiyār" (Sanskrit and Tamiḻ respectively for "Teacher") by the Dīṭcitars, are thought to embody the souls of the ancestors during the ritual, and they are fed, adorned with expensive clothes, and paid handsomely for assuming this role. Their duties in the temple include chanting the *mantras* for the Homa (fire) Sacrifice and directing the officiating priest, who is always a Dīṭcitar, in the carrying out of the fire sacrifice each morning. They also play a supervisory role in certain festival rituals, such as initiating the head priest and raising the opening flag, but in these rituals as well it is the Dīṭcitar who handles the images or handles the flag.

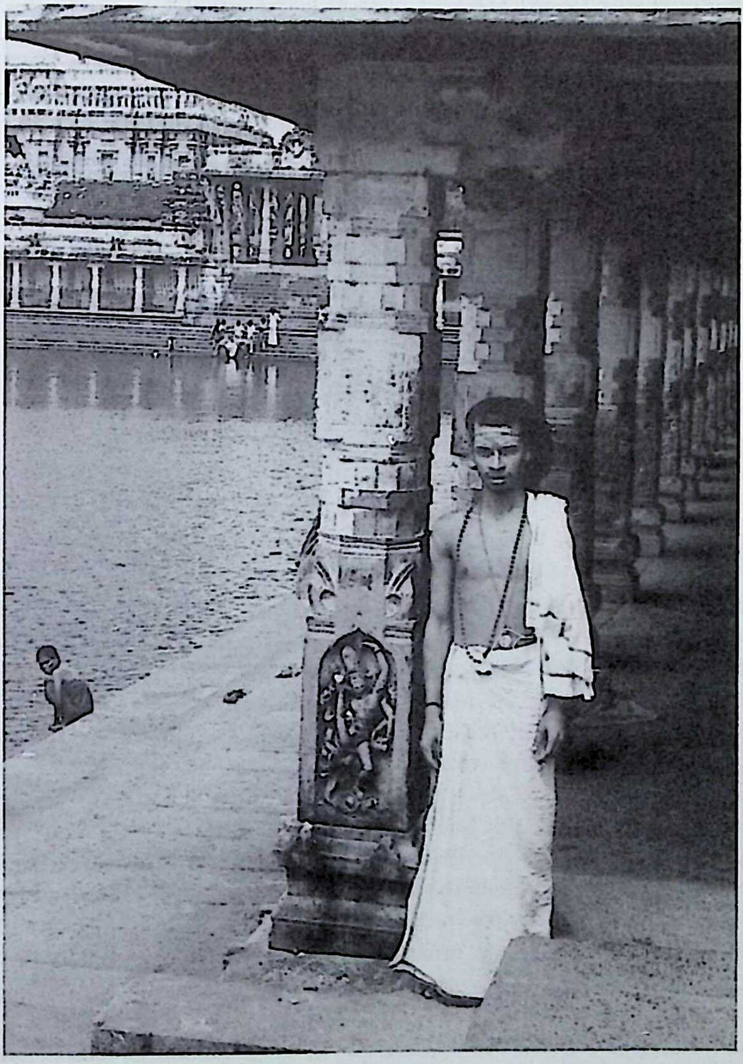
In many ways the Aiyars who work in the temple are given a ritual status and an income well beyond that enjoyed by members of the Dīṭcitar community. On the other hand the Dīṭcitars refer to them as employees; they do not include them in any of their meetings; nor do the Aiyars normally enter the inner sanctum or care for the image of Dancing Śivan̲. It is as if the larger ritual hierarchy of Hinduism touches the priestly community in the realms of domestic ritual and ritual chanting, and in those contexts the Dīṭcitars have come to acknowledge that the Aiyars are at the top of that ritual hierarchy. On the other hand, in the context of the worship of Naṭarājan̲, those standards seem to have been eclipsed, and in that context the main community of priests or the Potu Dīṭcitars consider themselves to be beyond human comparisons and part of a divine order of service.

The careful distribution of ritual duties means that among themselves Dīṭcitars practice a rigidly observed democracy. While various individuals among the Aiyars who work in the temple are described by name and are characterized as a ''great astrologer'' or a ''great scholar,'' such expressions of inequality are unknown in the Dīṭcitar community. While there are a number of *gotras* or subgroups, which for marriage purposes provide a small measure of exogamy, in that the husband and wife cannot be from the same *gotra*, the Dīṭcitars do not speak of a hierarchy of *gotras* or a hierarchy of family status such as one finds everywhere else in Indian society.[31] Because the rule is that a male of any age who is married can serve with



Dīṭcitar family (son is married and a priest) full rights as a priest, and that widowers may not serve as priests, the pattern is for early marriages (boys about twelve and girls seven) and the priesthood has an average age just over thirty. As a result teenage priests are very prominent in the temple, and in family life as well, and the younger members of the community show much less hesitancy in the presence of their elders than do their contemporaries generally in Indian society.

Because the Dīṭcitar community expects all its male members to become priests, there are probably more priests in the temple at Citamparam than the offerings of the worshiping community can properly support. The legendary vow the priests took when they returned from doing a sacrifice in North India said that they would



Dīṭcitar near Tank

"never leave" the feet of Śivan̲ again, and that vow is now interpreted to mean that a Dīṭcitar should not take employment outside of Citamparam. A small number have received permission from the Assembly to take up teaching jobs or something else related to the priesthood on a temporary basis, but in general it is expected that all males in the community will take part in the regular priestly service.

The priests claim that the ritual they perform is *"Vaidic"* rather than *"Ākamic."* By *"Ākamic"* they mean the style of prayer used by the *arccakan̲s* or priests in the Śaiva temples of the region, where the prayers are supposed to be based on the *Śaiva Ākamams,* and prayer books based on the *Ākamams* are provided to assist the priests.[32] By the term *"Vaidic"* the Dīṭcitars are indicating that the prayers they recite have been handed down in another way, and ultimately have their source in the texts of the four *Vedas*. The actual prayer books used by the priests are the *Śrī Paṭañjali Pūjāsūtram* and the *Śrīmat Sūta Samhitā Samgrahah*, which they claim were specifically prepared for the worship of this temple by the great Sanskrit grammarian, Paṭañjali, who lived in the second century B.C.E.[33] The present-day priests do not usually recite clearly, and few of the worshipers are aware of the content or origin of the mantras recited.

Whatever the origin of the Dīṭcitar community that leads the worship in Citamparam, the community for a long time has been held in awe, and the management system and ritual arrangements it uses in the temple are very unusual. Its survival as a human community seems precarious today, as it almost certainly has at earlier points in its history, but the quiet dignity with which the daily ritual goes on at the central shrine includes no sense of that precarious background. In the context of worship the eternal recurrence of the dance of Śivan̲ seems to provide a sense of timelessness that makes one believe that the priests in fact will "never leave" the feet of Dancing Śivan̲.

The Daily Worship Routine at the Central Shrine

As is the case in most large South Indian temples the central shrine of Citamparam is now enclosed in a series of high concentric stone walls broken by huge gateway towers or *kōpurams* (Sanskrit: *gōpura*). The central shrine itself at the center of this great complex is still the tiny wooden "Little Hall" celebrated in so many hymns, and it still has the gold shingled roof the Cōl̲a king placed on it in the ninth century. The Little Hall itself is twelve by twenty-four feet, but it is set on a three-foot-high stone platform, which is twice that size, so that the front or southern half of the platform serves as a porch where much of the ritual is carried out. The porch has a thatch-style roof in copper that matches the golden roof of the central shrine. The central shrine was traditionally called the Cir̲r̲ampalam or Little Hall in Tamil̲, but is now usually called by the more Sanskritic name Cit Sabhā or Consciousness Hall, and the covered porch is now usually called the Kanaka Sabhā or Golden Hall, a name once used of the central shrine but now arbitrarily shifted to the porch area.

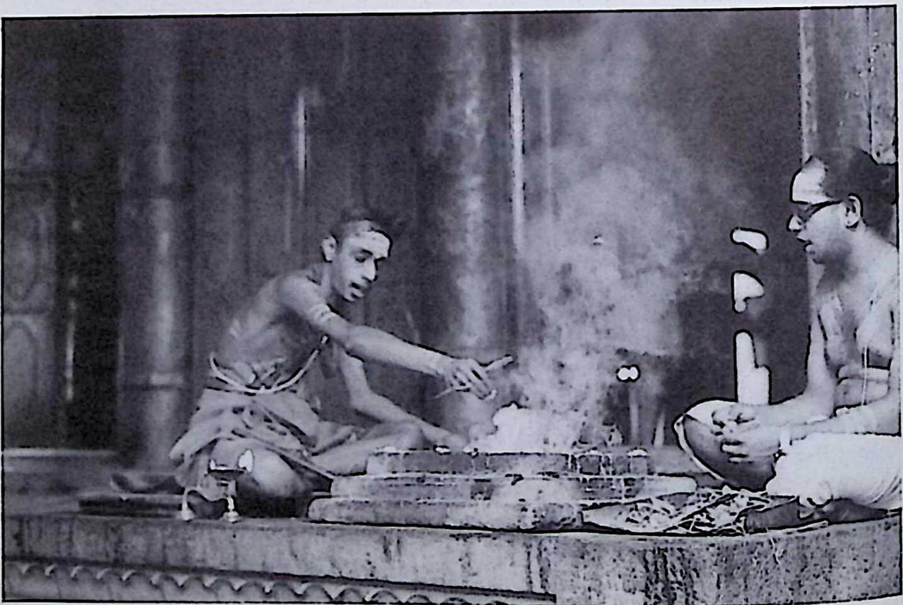
The worship day at the central shrine is divided into six *kālams* or blocks of time.[34] Within each block of time certain rituals must be carried out and any lapse in punctuality or care in the performance brings about severe penalties from the *Potu* or Assembly of the priesthood. (Requests from government officials and wealthy donors for modifications in the timings in order that important people might worship at their convenience have been summarily rejected, and have led to some resentment against the priestly community.) The first three of these *kālams* occur when the temple is open in the morning hours from 6 A.M. to 1 P.M., and the other three occur when it reopens in the evening from 5 P.M. to 10 P.M. The common feature of all six *kālams* is that the Crystal Liṅkam,[35] which is a ritual substitute for the larger image of Naṭarājan̲, is brought from the inner sanctum of the Cit Sabhā to the eastern side of the front porch or the Kanaka Sabhā. Then an elaborate bathing or *apiṭēkam* (Sanskrit: *abhiṣeka*) is performed. After the Crystal Liṅkam is returned to the inner sanctum camphor lights (*dīpam*) are moved about in front of the Naṭarājan̲ image and bells are rung while the devotees worship. Interspersed with this central ritual are many other rituals especially associated with each *kālam*, giving each hour of the day its special character.

The first *kālam*, called Kālasamdhi Pūja, is very elaborate and lasts until almost 10 A.M. After the temple is opened at 6 A.M. the *brāhmaṇa* families who assist the Dīṭcitars clean up the central sanctum of the temple and bring water from the Brahmā Kūpam well just to the east of the Cit Sabhā, the priests attend to the deity, and the devotees are given their first view of the image. At about 6:30 the *nākacurams*, or reed horns, are played and the drums sound as a palanquin is brought to the door of the Paḷḷiyar̲ai or room where the image of the feet of the deity was placed in a swing the night before, so that it could be with an image of the goddess which is kept in that bedroomlike setting. This room is just behind the Cit Sabhā at the corner of the northern side of the surrounding wall just near the stairway of the northwestern corner. On hearing the music, the crowd of about two hundred, which gathers daily in front of the Cit Sabhā, moves over to the western side of the surrounding walkway so that the worshipers can see the Paḷḷiyar̲ai. The image of the feet is taken from the Paḷḷiyar̲ai by the priest appointed for the day and it is placed in the palanquin where it is tied by the *brāhmaṇa* who assists in the ritual. The palanquin is then carried to the eastern side of the Cit Sabhā (about forty feet) as the crowd follows. There the image of the feet is untied and carried inside by the priest. The doors are then closed for a few minutes as a *pāl naivēttiyam* (Sanskrit: *nivedya*) or milk breakfast is offered to the deity. When the doors are reopened, members of the crowd offer worship, after which most leave for their day's work.[36]

By 8 A.M. the daily Homa (fire) Sacrifice begins. Although the ritual is spoken of as a fire sacrifice, it involves elaborate procedures with water as well as with fire. It begins with twelve silver pots being placed in a rectangle just inside the east doors of the Kanaka Sabhā, with the longer side of the rectangle east to west. After filling the pots with water, sacred *kuca* grass and *vilva* leaves are placed on top of the pots and Vedic verses or mantras are chanted into the water, so that the pots are said to hold the power of the mantras. Just to the east of these pots and on the outer porch of the northeast corner of the Kanaka Sabhā, a three-tiered fireplace is set up. The reciter, who appears to be in charge of the ceremony and chants the Vedas both into the pots and into the fire, is a member of the non-Dīṭcitar group of five Aiyar families. He sits to the northwest of the fire. The Dīṭcitar priest who is in charge for the day wears a special orange silk *dhoti* (tied in the style of a North Indian male), *rudrakṣa* beads, and a special ring with sacred *darbha* grass tied through it. He sits to the south of the fire and is the one who actually puts *kuca* grass, wood, and *ghee* or clarified butter on the fire as instructed by the Aiyar. In the placing of *ghee* the priest uses two wooden ladles, one with a small bowl at the end and the one with the bowl in the center.[37] *Bali* or offerings of rice are kept beside the fire and placed on the four corners of the altar.

By about 9 A.M. the Dīṭcitar priest on duty for the day starts the bathing of the Crystal Liṅkam. In performing this ritual the priest sits inside the Kanaka Sabhā facing north with the *liṅkam* visible to the devotees through the southern half of the eastern doorway. He makes certain preparations of the place, saying mantras or magical verses and washing the area. Then he brings the *liṅkam* from the inner sanctum, where it normally rests at the feet of Lord Naṭarājan̲. The Crystal Liṅkam or Chandramaulēsvara is about two inches high and is made of a translucent material which is called *sphatika* or "moonbeams" by the priests.[38] The priest pours twelve pots of water over the *liṅka*m as he puts flowers and *kuca* grass on it. He then bathes it in oil and milk in succession. Then he pours honey, a sugar-banana mixture, coconut milk, and lime juice over it in turn, followed by the *pañcāmṛtam* or five-fruit nectar of immortality. Next he places a measure of cooked rice over it and washes it again, and, finally, sandal-paste water and Ganga water is poured over it.[39]

After he takes the Crystal Liṅkam back to the inner sanctum, the doors are closed as the deity is fed with rice, red pepper, cumin, salt, and *ghee*. Then the food is taken to all the images of the sages in the corners of the sanctum, then



Fire sacrifice (Dīṭcitar on left, Smārta Brāhmaṇa on right) around the inner *pirakāram* (Sanskrit: *prakāra*) or ceremonial walkway between the concentric walls, and to the large *bali pīṭam* (Sanskrit: *pīṭha*) or altar behind the flagstaff to the south of the sanctum (a ceremony similar to the daily feeding of ancestors in an orthodox home). Finally, the small image of the deity, who is called Kalyāna Cuntaraṉ and is also normally kept at the feet of Lord Naṭarājaṉ, is placed on the palanquin and carried around the second *pirakāram* (numbered from the inside around the central shrine and moving to the outside of the temple complex), where further *bali* or food offerings are distributed at the various shrines.

After 8:00 the crowd usually slowly declines, but by about 9:30 a hundred or so newcomers gather as the first *kālam* closes with the *dīpam* or showing of the camphor lamps before the deity. First there is the Oṭṭa Dīpam or conical-shaped lamp with dozens of wicks, then the five Aṭukka Dīpams with one wick on lamps of a man-animal, a bull, a snake, and the like. Then a number of platelike lamp holders starting with five, then four wicks, and so on. Finally a number of golden instruments such as an umbrella, fan, mirror, and flower bouquet are held up before the deity. The *dīpam* is done first with the priest standing in the Kanaka Sabhā and is then repeated with a smaller number of lamps in the Cit Sabhā or inner sanctum itself. Finally, the priest goes to the Rahacya (Sanskrit: *Rahasya*),[40] or curtain of golden *vilva* leaves, which hangs to the west of the deity, and shines a lamp on it three times. By 10 A.M. the *kālam* is over, and the temple is very quiet.

About 10:45 the priest begins the second bathing of the Crystal Liṅkam, which is called simply Iraṇṭu Kālam or Second Kālam. The crowd is generally quite a bit larger at this time and is usually over three hundred by 11 A.M. The bathing of the Crystal Liṅkam is carried out exactly as it was a couple of hours earlier. The feature of the Second Kālam, however, is the bathing of the Ruby Naṭarājaṉ, which takes place just after that of the Crystal Liṅkam. The Ruby Naṭarājaṉ or Ratna Sabhāpati is about four inches high and is probably made out of the famous ruby given to Naṭarājaṉ by Vīra Rājendra Cōḻa (1063–69), which he called the Trailokya Sāra.[41] The bathing of this delicate image is done with only water, milk, honey, and sandal-paste water. The highlight of the devotees' day comes when the camphor light is shown in front of the image and then suddenly is moved behind the image in such a way as to shine through the red stone. This is repeated five times. The *kālam* ends about 11:30 with the usual showing of the *dīpam* before the main deity.

The third or Ucci Kālam (Noon Kālam) is done about 12:30 with the usual bathing of the Crystal Liṅkam and the usual showing of the *dīpam*. This ritual does not include any special features and there is only a modest crowd in attendance. The doors are all locked by 1 P.M.

When the temple is reopened at 5 P.M. fresh garlands are placed on the deity and the sanctum is swept out by the *brāhmaṇa* who assists the priest. The crowd reaches its maximum for the day at this time and most of the worshipers bring baskets of coconuts and flowers so that the sanctum is very busy with the Dīṭcitars taking the offerings into the inner sanctum on behalf of their clients. This *kālam* is called the Samdhya Kālam or the Sunset Kālam. There is the usual bathing of the Crystal Liṅkam, but the *dīpam* is done more slowly and carefully to the sound of loud bells, and it is considered by many the most important time in the day for worship.

The second *kālam* of the evening starts about 7 P.M. The crowd is still in the hundreds for this *kālam*, and the special attraction of this time is that after the Crystal Liṅkam has been bathed, and the first set of *dīpam* from the Kanaka Sabhā shown, the temple falls silent as two apparently ordinary worshipers standing at the front of the crowd sing a few of the famous hymns of the *Tēvāram* saints to the deity. These singers are non-*brāhmaṇas* who do not wear a sacred thread. One of the two is a family member from a caste of full-time singers called Ōtuvārs who have traditionally sung these hymns and are now employed by the different Śaiva Siddhānta *maṭams* and assigned to different temples. One, however, is a businessman who has learned to sing the hymns in the classical way. Standing in the crowd with their upper bodies bare and their hands clasped together high above their heads, they are a picture of utter devotion, with which all the laypersons present can identify.[42] For these ten minutes the priests wait, for it is the only time during the day that the focus of the worship clearly shifts to the lay worshipers. Finally, the last part of the *dīpam* is performed in the inner sanctum.

For a while the temple grows quiet, but a small crowd comes back again for the final *kālam* or Ardha Yāman. The bathing of the Crystal Liṅkam is the same. The evening supper served to the deity is of milk rice, a lentil or split pea, and *ghee poṅkal* or butter pudding, a sugar *poṅkal*, *ūppama* or cake offerings, and *paiyacam* or rice pudding. After the *dīpam* the feet of the deity are placed in the palanquin and taken to the Paḷḷiyaṟai room, where again milk is served to both the god and goddess and the *dīpam* of both is shown. On Friday evening this ceremony is much more elaborate with a special golden palanquin and a golden "feet" image used, and the procession goes all around the second *pirakāram* to the accompaniment of music and the antiphonal singing of a group of sixteen Ōtuvārs or hymn singers. On this evening the crowd is in the hundreds. After placing the feet in the Paḷḷiyaṟai, the day is ended by worshiping at the shrines of Brahmā Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ and Bhairava just to the east of the central shrine.[43]

Worship in the Four Other "Major" Shrines

For dividing up priestly duties the priests speak of five major shrines. The first, or the shrine of Lord Naṭarājaṉ, is the heart of the temple in every way, and is not comparable to the others. The other four do, however, involve the performance of a full range of daily rituals, and do require both priests and assistants in attendance.

The second of the shrines in importance is that of the goddess Śivakāmacuntari. The very large temple of the goddess is in the northwest area of the third courtyard or *pirakāram* and faces east into the great Śivagangā tank or water reservoir. The compound of the temple is very large with a two-story pillared portico running around the outside courtyard and large open areas in the covered inner courtyard as well. Both the outer and the inner courtyards have magnificent pillared halls in front. The ceiling of the outer front courtyard has famous Vicayanakaram-period paintings, as well as more recent ones. The goddess is bathed twice daily after which a series of *dīpams* or lights are shown. *Arccaṉais* or the prayers of clients are said before her throughout the day. A regular stream of worshipers enters the shrine of the goddess and small crowds gather for the *apiṭēkam* or bathing and *dīpam*, but the large halls generally have an empty look. Only on her special festivals or when recitations of thousands of prayers in fulfillment of a vow are being carried out[44] does this large temple seem to fill up.

Just next to the temple of the goddess is the temple of Murukan̲ (Sanskrit: Skanda) known as the Pāṇṭyanāyakan̲ (because it was built by the Pāṇṭya kings, see Story 3), which is in the far northwest corner of the temple's third courtyard. The halls are again generous with special pillars, much like those of the Nṛtta Sabhā or the dance hall near the inner shrine, in which carving is done from top to bottom. The hall is arranged so that large crowds can stream past the image of Murukan̲ on his peacock, but on the average day there are no crowds and the priest performs the *apiṭēkam* as a few worshipers trickle by. This Murukan̲ temple serves large crowds only when Murukan̲ devotees come for the special Murukan̲ festivals. Worship in this temple has a minimum of connections to that offered to Lord Naṭarājan̲.

While the goddess's temple and Murukan̲ temple are in the open courtyard of the third *pirakāram*, and therefore function in their own distinctive way with their own worshipers and their own festivals, the other two of the "major" shrines are in the covered inner courtyard of the second *pirakāram* and serve more as adjuncts to the main shrine. The *liṅkam* temple, which was called the Mūlastāna or "Root Shrine" in the thirteenth century when it was probably built,[45] has the structure and character of a small *liṅkam* temple that might be found in any small town. It does not have festivals of its own, and hence does not have a flagstaff as do the temples of the goddess and Murukan̲, but in every other way it is a complete temple. It has a *bali pītam* or altar on which rice offerings are made each day; it has a small temple to the deity's consort just outside the entrance facing south across the east-facing entranceway; it has the orthodox *mukha maṇṭapa* or front room into which the worshipers crowd in the semidarkness; and beyond the *antarāla* passageway with some screened light is the dark inner room called the *garbha gṛha* or womb where the *liṅkam* is worshiped. The priests pour water, flowers, coconuts, and oil over the *liṅkam* and then bring out from the damp darkness the tray that gives the worshiper a pinch of ash and a chance to touch the camphor lights and to collect some flower or coconut which has been offered to the deity. This worship pattern is familiar from other Śaiva temples and is popular in the evenings with people who have been raised elsewhere and have become used to this system. Most of the worshipers come here first and then join the larger crowds at the Naṭarājan̲ shrine for at least a *darśana* or glimpse of that deity, but there is not in that context the atmosphere of temporarily leaving the world and entering a womblike darkness, which is available in this *liṅkam* temple.

The last of the five "major" shrines attended by a group of four priests for a four-day period is the Deva Sabhā. This hall is not really a shrine and worshipers do not normally stop there. As we will see in a later chapter when we discuss the original purposes of each of these buildings, the Deva Sabhā was the first of many buildings added to the original worship centers of the Cit Sabhā and the dance hall or Nṛtta Sabhā opposite it. Originally the Deva Sabhā was called the Pērampalam or "big hall" to contrast it with the name Cir̲r̲ampalam or "little hall," which was the name of the Cit Sabhā or main sanctum. It is a grand two-story building rising about forty-five feet into the air with a copper thatch dome roof on a wooden frame, which rises another twenty feet into the air. It was used as a royal seat during the Early Cōl̲a period or the ninth and tenth centuries. Once the walls were built close around it on all sides in the eleventh and twelfth centuries its grandeur was lost, and to see the high dome today one has to go outside and look from a great distance. After the royal seat was shifted to the great Rāja Sabhā or Thousand Pillared Hall in the third *pirakāram* in the twelfth century, the functions of the Deva Sabhā were altered. Its front porch became one of the most useful platforms in the temple complex, and was doubtless used for hymn singing and lectures and is still used for festival ceremonies such as the swinging of the goddess on the nights of Navarātri, and the periodic Mahākumbhābhiṣekams or rededication ceremonies.

The main functions of the Deva Sabhā today are twofold. It serves as a temple for the festival images, which are housed in small shrines against the north wall facing south. These images are fed and worshiped with lights each day. Few laymen join in this worship, but they are allowed to. The men usually have to be reminded to take off their shirts, as they do automatically when they enter the Kanaka Sabhā porch in front of the main shrine, indicating that it is not clear to all that the priests consider the Deva Sabhā a shrine. The second function of the Deva Sabhā is that it serves as the home base of the priesthood, which, as we have said before, thinks of itself as a part of the divine company worshiped in the temple. The priests' meetings are held in this hall and jewels, keys, and secret records, if not kept there, are handled and transferred there. It is in front of this hall that the Dīṭcitars sit and meet the worshipers as they come in the eastern entrance to the inner sanctum area. After accompanying the worshipers into worship, they come back to this point with them, somewhat as hosts might. In this way the older pattern of the "Little Hall" serving as the inner center of spiritual life and the "Big Hall" serving as the outer center of social contact is still maintained.

Worship at the Ten "Minor" Shrines

In addition to the five major centers of worship in the temple complex, there are about twenty places where people prostrate briefly as they go about their temple worship. Ten of these have been thought to be sufficiently important that they are in constant attendance by priests and have regular daily bathing and feeding of the images.

The only one of the ten minor shrines outside the *kōpuram* entrances is the Kar̲paka Vināyakan̲ shrine outside the western *kōpuram* in the fourth *pirakāram*. This shrine has an inscription indicating that it was built or renovated by a Pāṇṭya king (*ARE* 1913, 330), who had it crowded against the *kōpuram* wall on the ritually "wrong" or right-hand side as one enters. It was probably placed where it is in order to fit in with a popular cult that had grown up around the *vilva* tree nearby, which is said to be a wish-fulfilling tree considered very sacred by the worshipers. Hence the Vināyakan̲ image was given the unusual name of Kar̲paka or "Wish-Fulfilling" Vināyakan̲. There is considerable intensity in the worship of the poor people who are fond of this shrine, and a fair number of those who come here to worship do not go into the temple.

The second of the minor shrines is the more orthodox Vināyakan̲ (Sanskrit: Ganeṣa) temple in the southwest corner of the large third *pirakāram* facing east. This is an exquisite little temple in classic Cōl̲a style, measuring about twenty by forty feet, with a pillared front porch on which the pillar sculpture illustrates many features of the traditional Vināyakan̲ cultus. In addition to the well-known reliefs of Vināyakan̲ and the traditional rat who serves, comically, as the *vāhana* or "vehicle" on which this gentle overweight elephant-faced deity rides, there is a relief of Vināyakan̲ with his trunk on the vagina of a female held on his knee, and a Vināyakan̲ with breasts and the hoofs of a cow. Although set out in the open courtyard rather far from the busier parts of the temple complex, this little temple is the auspicious first place to worship on a thorough visit to the temple complex (to the left whether one enters by either the east or south *kōpuram* or gateway), and it therefore receives a steady stream of visitors, ultimately receiving a volume of worshipers second only to the main shrine. The ritual is simple with *apiṭēkams* or bathings done between nine and eleven each morning and six and eight each evening, but most worshipers stay only long enough to get a pinch of ash for their forehead and to touch their hands to the camphor lights.

The third minor shrine is the Murukan̲ shrine just to the north of Vināyakan̲ and just inside the western *kōpuram*. This shrine is architecturally plain, crowds the courtyard at that point, and duplicates the Murukan̲ temple further to the north in the same courtyard. It was developed in that location because the Murukan̲ being worshiped is part of the lower tier of sculptures on the *kōpuram* wall.[46] It is hard to miss for those entering from the west or proceeding from the Vināyakan̲ temple toward the goddess temple, and it receives a regular stream of brief visits.

The fourth minor shrine is the tiny and very obscure shrine of Durgā as Mahiṣāsuramardinī, or the "Buffalo-demon-slayer," which is just outside the entrance to the goddess temple and faces north, which is the traditional direction for Durgā. The obscure position of this shrine is explained by the fact that it is undoubtedly very old, perhaps before the surrounding walls were put up. An inscription on the wall says that in the thirteenth-century Kōpperuñciṅkan̲ provided for offerings to a deity called Aṇṭāparaṇatēva (*ARE* 1913, 326 and 327). That would appear to have been a male deity, which cannot now be identified. It may have been a deity in this shrine who was subsequently replaced by Durgā, or, in the light of the extreme conservatism of the temple, we might be safer to suggest that it was a subsidiary of Durgā.[47] Worship in this tiny shrine is now carried out before an intense and packed crowd on Friday evenings and on other special festival days. There are frequently priests saying thousands or hundreds of thousands of prayers in this shrine as part of a vow some worshipers are paying to have carried out. Occasionally these vows involve the performance of a major *yajña* or fire sacrifice (called Rudra Apiṭēkam) with a hundred priests involved and costs that go into the thousands of rupees.

The fifth minor shrine is the hall with nine *liṅkams* representing the nine planets, which is set just north of the Śivagaṅgā tank and near the north entrance to the third courtyard. This shrine was obviously intended to provide an alternative to the display of planet images, which is a major attraction of all South Indian Śaiva temples and which is the place where dozens of vow keepers circle repeatedly each night in fulfillment of vows. The plan was only partially successful, however, for while some do come here to worship, a small display of the planet images has been set up in the inside corridor near the Deva Sabhā and it draws more worshipers because it is a more convenient place to worship for those making a quick visit to the main shrine.

The other five minor shrines are to be found in the "inner" or covered courtyard of the second *pirakāram*, where a much busier worship atmosphere is to be found than in the great open areas of the third courtyard. The first of the minor shrines encountered inside is the Tirumuṟai Kāṭṭiya Vināyakaṉ (the Vināyakaṉ who points out the Scriptures) just inside the western entrance. For those who start their worship here he is an auspicious beginning, and even for those who have done some preliminary worship in the outside third *pirakāram*, he represents the restart of a sequence, each step of which is more or less compulsory from now on to those who come to this entrance and take this route. A story attached to this Vināyakaṉ says that he assisted those who were looking for the lost hymns and pointed to a room in the west *kōpuram*, which is visible through the doorway in front of him, where the hymn manuscripts were found (cf. Stories 1, 4, and 6). This is a problematic story in that the present *kōpuram* was probably not built until a couple of centuries after this tenth-century crisis, although there might have been an earlier gateway of some sort. The point of the story in any case is that Vināyakaṉ opens up opportunities for people, and that reputation ensures that worshipers entering by this western doorway are careful to take a pinch of ash from the priests seated there.

Moving in the proper direction for worship, which is to keep the main shrine to your right, the worshipers move north along the western corridor where small images of the four major saints (Māṇikkavācakar, Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar) rest unattended. Turning into the northern corridor, the worshipers come next to the Dakṣiṇamūrti image, which, as its name suggests, looks south into the corridor from the middle of the south wall of the *liṅkam* temple. Dakṣiṇamūrti is the meditative image of Śivaṉ, which was obviously at one time the center of a distinctive cult and is still a prominent feature in most Śaiva temples. This particular image was provided with elaborate ritual attention in the thirteenth century by Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ (*ARE* 1913, 305 and 307). The image is now given only the usual bathing and feeding, but the worshipers frequently spend considerable time prostrating before it, even though the busy corridor does not provide a very sheltered location for extended worship. After worshiping at the Dakṣiṇamūrti, a few worshipers circle back behind the *liṅkam* temple where there are images of all sixty-three saints or *nāyanmār*, but those images are not attended by priests. Also unattended by priests most of the time is the Ayyappaṉ image at the eastern end of the northern corridor facing north and attached to the back of the Deva Sabhā. Because of the huge cult that has developed in South India in recent years around the pilgrimage to the main Ayyappaṉ shrine in Kerala, this little image in Citamparam becomes the object of special worship during December and January when the unshaven young male Ayyappaṉ pilgrims dressed in black descend on this corner of the temple in groups of twenty or more and chant their loud joyful cries to Ayyappaṉ. During this season the priests of the temple do attend to this image with somewhat greater care, even though it is not listed among the ten minor shrines.

The last three minor shrines are all in a cluster outside the southern exit to the inner or first *pirakāram* and worship there tends to take place after worship at the main shrine. The shrine to the east of the Nṛtta Sabhā and the two up on the Nṛtta Sabhā to the south and west are grouped together and must be covered by the two priests on duty there. These shrines are those of Kālasamhāramūrti,[48] Śarabhēśvara,[49] and Taṇḍavamūrti-Kāḷi[50] respectively. While each of these is a divine form which is much feared by worshipers who know the stories, most worshipers are unclear about their import and relatively few visit these shrines.

In behind and to the south of the Nṛtta Sabhā is the *piracātam* (Sanskrit: *prasāda*) stand, where food offerings that have been presented to the deity are offered for sale. Although this is not really a shrine and it is given less importance in the worship patterns of this temple than in many others, two priests are assigned to it at all times and it is administered as one of the minor shrines.

The last of the minor shrines is the Daṇḍāyudha Pāṇi high above the southern corridor leading out to the west as the worshiper departs. This is the angry side of Murukaṉ and the form in which he is found in Paḻaṉi, the most popular temple in Tamiḻnāṭu. The story behind this form of Murukaṉ is that he left the home of his parents to become an ascetic and carry a big stick after he was offended by what he considered his parents' favoritism for his brother Vināyakaṉ. A fruit had been offered to the first of the boys who could "encircle the world." Murukaṉ set off running, but Vināyakaṉ encircled his parents Śivaṉ and Parvati, and thereby claimed the prize. Murukaṉ was offended when he eventually returned, and as a result he became an ascetic. In Citamparam the shrine is included in the worship of only a few worshipers who prefer to leave the temple by the western *kōpuram* and pass this shrine as they leave the central shrine area.

The Pattern of Worship

The pattern of daily worship in the temple is that of high-church ritualism. The ritual takes priority over all else and is carefully carried out whether there is no crowd at all or overflowing crowds surging from wall to wall. The worshipers are predominantly "regulars" who come daily or weekly or even twice a day, or, in the case of a few individuals, for each of the six *kālams*. A few are ascetics with ankle length matted locks, others are widows and retired men, others young housewives and students. There are more family groups in the evening.

Each worshiper has a routine of his or her own that involves visits to various of the subsidiary shrines before the arrival at the central shrine for sharing in a climactic moment in the ritual there. The artistry of the moment at the central shrine is carefully cultivated. Occasional bells provide reminders of the well-known timetable through which the regular worshiper shares the entire day in the life of the deity. A worshiper often comments quietly on what is transpiring in the central shrine even as he or she goes about another routine in the outer courtyards, but then his or her pace quickens or slackens as the mind unconsciously prepares for the arrival at the central shrine before the climactic moment.

Once inside the covered corridors the ordering of space blends with the ordering of time as the various vantage points are explored. At points in the ritual it is possible to get close to the deity by entering the Kanaka Sabhā, but at the high moments in the ritual the choice is limited to the following: a view from a number of sharp angles through the eastern doors; a view to the south from the floor level up past the priests on the four-foot-high Kanaka Sabhā porch and on beyond to the deity bathed in light two feet higher still; a view over the heads of those at floor level by standing on the platform of the hallway to the southern doorway, a platform that is of the same height as the Kanaka Sabhā; or a view over the heads of all the worshipers by going out to the Nṛtta Sabhā, which is five feet higher still, and looking past the golden pillar and all the worshipers and priests straight into the hall of the deity itself. Well before the *dīpam* everyone searches out a favorite place.

Aware of the approaching sacred time and the beautiful surroundings (including now the clusters of worshipers) in which the deity dwells, the worshiper begins to focus on the visual experience of the central shrine. An arch of *ghee*-burning wicks marks the entrance to the inner sanctum, and camphor lights indicate the general outlines of the deity's image, with at least the upper hands, which hold the drum of creation and the fire of destruction, showing (the rest is covered with garlands, jewelry, and clothes). The priests move gracefully back and forth and the doors are closed and then opened as various phases of the ritual are completed. Suddenly the drums sound in the background and then the reed temple pipes are heard. These are followed by the deafening gong of two huge bells and the nervous excitement of the sound of a dozen little bells on a rocker bar. Everyone gets on to his or her toes with arms raised in worship and children are held up in excitement as the twenty camphor lights are shown before the deity and the kicking "leg of grace" comes into view. The experience is described in the traditional language as a *darśana* or a "glimpse" of the god.[51] The visual and auditory conditions of this experience in Citamparam are so rich, and the awareness of space, time, and community so complete at that moment, that one needs to borrow a term from the aesthetic realm and define its special character. It is a very peaceful, fulfilling experience, which might be described as something like "rapture," the emotion one might associate with the end of a Mozart opera, or the state to which the soul is led in Plato's *Symposium*.

To define this pattern of worship within its own cultural setting of South India, it might be useful to contrast it with the other prevailing patterns. One of the striking things about worship in Citamparam is its detachment from the sectarian theological controversies in the area. This is in sharp contrast, for instance, to the situation at the best known Vaiṣṇava temple of Śrīraṅkam where the adherents of the Teṅkalai and Vatakalai sects are distinguished by marks on their foreheads and where the complicated traditions of respect for certain Vaiṣṇava saints are central features of the ritual.[52] The equivalent theological differences in the Śaiva tradition are between the monistic Advaita school following Śaṅkara and the theistic Śaiva Siddhānta school following Meykaṇṭar. The high-status Smārta Brāhmaṇas, who closely follow the first, and the high-status non-*brāhmaṇas*, who follow the second, both worship in Citamparam, but neither group has a direct hand in the worship. The Dīṭcitars are not thought of as in either camp. The heads of the *maṭams*, where these opposing philosophical positions are upheld, occasionally visit the temple, but they are not given a place in its ritual. The ritual associated with the Rahacya (Secret) or the screen of golden *vilva* leaves, which hangs just to the west of the deity, are clearly a preservation of an earlier attempt to give ritual form to the monistic philosophy of the Advaita school. This interpretative framework is still important to the meanings attached to words such as "*cit*" (consciousness), "*ampalam*" (hall or space), and "*ākāśa*" (ether, emptiness) in temple usage, but the brief showing of the camphor lights in this part of the sanctum at the conclusion of each *dīpam* is now smoothly blended into the larger ritual. In a similar way the ritual hesitation for the singing of a hymn just before the conclusion of the fifth *kālam* incorporates the theistic tradition of Śaiva Siddhānta into the ritual, but again it blends in so naturally as hardly to constitute an acknowledgment of that school's sectarian tenets. The priests contend that their rituals are independent of sectarian influence because they are the products of traditions that long predate the rise of sectarian schools. (See Story 6 for detailed discussion of the schools.) Although one would want to indicate to them that it is generally difficult to keep traditions pure, and that there are some elements of their tradition, such as the worship of the Rahacya, that may be more sectarian than they realize, their contention that sectarian interpretations of their ritual are later and that the ritual has its own independent structure and meaning generally seems to be correct.

A second important pattern of worship in South India from which the pattern in Citamparam differs sharply is the tendency to define worship in terms of individual requests for forgiveness or blessing. Increasingly in the currently popular temples of Palani, Tirupati, and Sabarimala the pattern of worship is one borrowed from the temples of the angry goddesses where the worshiper makes a vow; prepares himself or herself for a minipilgrimage by performing austerities in terms of sexual habits, food, and dress; and then, with a final headshaving, fire bowl, or other offering presents himself or herself before the deity with a specific request.[53] In these cases the priest's function is reduced to receiving the offerings at the end of this pattern, and the regular ritual is squeezed in unobserved as the rush of worshipers perform the string of actions called for by their vows. A little of this pattern is operative at Citamparam as well in the minds of worshipers who are familiar with other shrines, and many of the hurried visits to the numerous subsidiary shrines take on some of this character. The most common pattern for regular worshipers is to visit at least Vināyakan, the goddess, the planets, the Śivagangā tank, and then the main deity. Some worshipers, however, make specific vows to pay a daily visit to the tank and the Durgā temple, to circle the planets a specific number of times, or to break numerous coconuts in offering. Near the main shrine, however, such individualistic forms of worship are carefully discouraged. It is amusing to watch the young priests counseling worshipers, pointing out that random ringing of the bells and loud singing and dancing are frowned upon. They frequently have to explain to impatient worshipers that the offering of the baskets of coconut, flowers, and camphor along with *arccanais* at the main shrine can be done only in the prescribed way and only when the proper moments in the ritual allow. In general the priestly discouragement of this currently popular pattern of ritual is costing them support from the worshiping public. In particular this is true for the most intense of these worshiping groups, the groups of men who travel together from temple to temple preparing for their pilgrimage to the shrine of the deity Ayyappaṉ in Sabarimala during their November-to-January pilgrimage season. Such groups regularly visit the small Ayyappaṉ image in the obscure northeast corner of the second *pirakāram*, where they chant loudly, and the priests generally try to accommodate them there. When, however, they burst into the area in front of the central image at the height of the ritual, calling excitedly to one another and chanting the name "Ayyappaṉ," the regular worshipers coolly continue to concentrate on the ritual. Usually these encounters of the two ritual patterns conclude with the Ayyappaṉ devotees becoming bored and leaving before the ritual reaches its climax with the showing of the camphor lights.

Most South Indian worshipers are comfortably familiar with the patterns of worship in the different temples. Even those with a primarily sectarian inclination or with a habit of making a vow and going to a deity with a specific request still occasionally enjoy the beauty and mystery associated with the older tradition of high ritual that is found in Citamparam.

Conclusion

Both the character of the priesthood and the pattern of ornate ritualistic worship the priests practice are thought of as unique features of the Citamparam temple tradition. Occasionally one or the other of these features of the temple is challenged as either not true to the tradition, or as irrelevant to the needs of present-day worshipers. Most South Indian worshipers, however, continue to be in awe of both the priesthood and the ritualism, and would tend to see the pattern of worship practiced in Citamparam as one of the highest forms of South Indian religion.

In a full sociology of South Indian priesthood, the Dīṭcitars serve as the exceptional case. They are unlike the priests or ascetics in the other religious institutions of South India, but they have some similarities to each of the other types of religious specialists, and in that sense are very much part of the overall sociological picture. They are, on the one hand, like the *arccakaṉs* of even the smallest temples in that they serve the image of the deity and present the offerings of the people to the deity. They are, on the other hand, like the Namboodris of Kerala, known for their Vedic fires and chanting, and in that sense bear with them the mystery and awe of an ancient Vedic heritage. Even more interesting is the fact that they organize themselves like an ascetic religious community and claim ownership of the temple as if it were primarily the worship center of their community. This claim to function as a religious community provides them a link to the powerful *maṭam* institutions of South India and allows them to deal with those institutions as equals, even though they do not share the celebate tradition of a *maṭam* and do not have the same loyalty to a specific theological teaching.

If the overall sociological structure of South India's religious institutions were defined as an interplay between institutions controlled by the surrounding social hierarchy (family, village, and regional temples managed by lay persons) and institutions controlled by religious specialists unattached to society (*maṭams* and the theologically defined temples linked to them), Citamparam would be the one institution that carved out a middle position. It has at times had committees of lay supporters, and has been closely linked to kings and ministers of the court. In many ways it was thought of throughout the centuries as a central pillar in the social order of the region, and it was called "the Kōyil" or "the Temple" even by people who knew it by reputation alone. At the same time, the priesthood of the temple has always had a reputation for having a loyalty to God alone. They were known to be a unique social unit that did not intermarry with anyone else in the local society, and it was assumed that their worship of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ involved some special theological understanding that was unique to them alone.

The priesthood operated in the midst of the changing social order, and yet the ritual it performed was thought to be so special that everyone who attached themselves to the worship tradition of the place did so without challenging that central ritual activity. As we will see when we look at the various building programs of the temple in a later chapter, the early cult of the temple seems to have included a place for the locally popular Kāḷi worship. We also know that the Cōḻa kings pushed the hymn-singing cult, that Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ pushed the *liṅkam* cult, and that others later pushed the Rahacya cult. What is interesting about these locally popular worship forms of different eras, however, is that the temple could add them to its worship pattern, and thereby serve as a temple responsive to the needs of the society around, without taking away from the priesthood its central focus on the worship at the feet of Dancing Śivaṉ.

In the modern era these traditional arrangements are being challenged once again. It is now generally acknowledged that the Cōḻa cultural synthesis, which defined South Indian society for so long, is finally coming unraveled. Cultural institutions such as the priesthood and worship system of Citamparam, which helped define that synthesis, are no longer at the center of a coherent system of meaning. New economic factors make the traditional landlord castes less powerful, and new political voices make the old interdependence of kings and priests seem like a part of the distant past.

In the new situation, the goddess temples, which have long been patronized by the lower classes, define the new tone of religious behavior. The worship pattern that involves passionate efforts to placate the anger of these goddesses and to place one's needs before them is now widely followed by all classes of society. The newly popular worship practices at some older temple sites such as Paḻaṉi, Sabarimala, and Tirupati have tended to follow this pattern of passionate personal request, even though those temples belong to Murukaṉ, Ayyappaṉ, and Viṣṇu respectively. Citamparam too has a touch of this new worship pattern in the way some of the worship at the Ayyappaṉ and goddess shrines is carried out, but it is hard to imagine the central reputation of the place shifting over to the new pattern.

At a more explicit level of institutional rivalry, the Citamparam priesthood is being challenged by the anti-Brāhmanism which characterizes the politics of Tamiḻnāṭu. In its simplest form this challenge was expressed in the two court cases the government brought against the priests, but that proved to be a challenge that even the courts thought was unjustified. In a more subtle form, the pressure comes from the three Śaiva Siddhānta *maṭams*, which generally support the worship system of Citamparam. These *maṭams* even provide some *kaṭṭalais* or endowments for the temple, but their reputation for non-*brāhmaṇa* leadership has meant that they have assumed a role in the general anti-Brāhmanism of the day. Many in the landlord castes that once provided the major support for the temples now prefer to channel their support to the *maṭams* run by their caste fellows, and the *maṭams* in turn are serving as the managers of many temples. The Dīṭcitars compromised with the *maṭams* in 1990 when they decided to allow the Ōtuvārs supplied by the *maṭams* to sing the hymns from the Kanaka Sabhā porch area. This allowed non-*brāhmaṇas* a more prominent place in the ritual, but it at the same time reaffirmed the role of the Dīṭcitars in making the decisions with regard to any changes in the ancient worship tradition.

Even though the worship traditions of Citamparam are challenged by the modern preference for a more individualistic and petitionary form of worship, and by the general anti-Brāhmanical tone of Tamiḻ politics, there are reasons to believe that the ornate ritualism of the worship in Citamparam may not have lost all its appeal in present day Tamiḻ society. One reason the more ritualistic tradition may have a new appeal is the aesthetic renaissance that is taking place in Tamiḻnāṭu. The most notable expression of this renaissance is the widespread popularity of classical Carnātaka (Tamiḻ) music and Bharat Natyam dance. Citamparam was historically one of the centers for both music and dance, and there is once again competition among the best musicians for an opportunity to sing or play at the temple festivals, and one of the major dance competitions is held each year right in the second *pirakāram* or inner courtyard of the temple. A second reason that the Citamparam ritual has a new appeal is that there is a zeal for old Tamiḻ culture among politicians, film makers, and intellectuals of all kinds. Temples generally are thought to represent medieval culture when North Indian influences were strong, but it is becoming more and more obvious that the Citamparam tradition reaches back beyond medieval times and may preserve something that is authentically Tamiḻ. Finally, the ancient rituals of Citamparam may have a new appeal because of a general uneasiness about urbanization and the individualism and competitiveness it fostered. Tamiḻ politics have recently been turning toward more traditional values, and giving more attention to the concerns of the rural majority. Even while other voices were being heard in the political arena in recent decades, the rural majority tended to continue with its traditional forms of temple worship. In some ways it is the 200,000 rural folk who jam the corridors of Citamparam for a festival every six months who are the best evidence that the worship tradition the Dīṭcitar priests are fighting to preserve is one Tamiḻ society still finds meaning in.

While skirmishes take place behind the scenes to determine what the future of the Citamparam ritual will be, the priests continue all the more carefully to carry out the prescribed ancient forms. The priests themselves no longer know the logic on which the ritual was established, but they feel that their ignorance only indicates how profound that logic must have been, and how important is the preservation of the forms it prescribed. The priests also recognize that they cannot forever just cling to a past tradition, and that as the pressures for change mount they will have to finds ways to try to recover the meaning of the forms they have so lovingly preserved over the centuries. Just how they will go about renewing the tradition as they maneuver past the economic and political challenges of each day is not clear, but they remain more determined than ever to try.

Notes

1. Many of the observations made in this story are a result of extensive field research, which included daily visits to the temple over the course of a year, and half a dozen subsequent visits in the years that followed. During all that time I had excellent rapport with the entire priestly community, and I was able to discuss my observations and even my written text with R. N. Naṭarājarathina Dīṭcitar, an active member of the priestly community who has an M.A. in English.

I also had a useful outside perspective on the priesthood through daily contact with a couple of retired professors in the nearby university with whom I was reading texts and discussing the nature of life in the temple.

2. The tradition dates him in the fifth century, but this date has been challenged by many modern scholars. The rather complex arguments on the dating problem will have to be taken up in Story 6 when we deal with his overall role in the Citamparam tradition.

3. Unless otherwise indicated, the texts used in this study are translated by the author, sometimes with the assistance of Tamiḻ-speaking friends, in what is really a paraphrase intended to give the sense of the passage in a style much like the rest of this study. This should make them easy to read quickly, but those interested in the meter of the poetry or some of the special beauty of particular hymns will have to look elsewhere.

The text used in this case is *Tiruvācakam* (1968).

4. This verse refers to the legend that recurs frequently in the tradition about how, when the three thousand priests arrived in Citamparam and were being counted, they could only find 2,999 until the voice of Śivaṉ came out of the heavens saying "I am the final one. I am one with them."

See Story 5 for a detailed analysis of the legend.

5. *Tirunāvukkarsu Suvāmikaḷ Tēvāram* (1976). This edition of the hymns uses the arrangement in which all the hymns of one temple are placed together. In this arrangement the tradition is that the hymns about Citamparam are first.

6. *Tiruñānacampanta Suvāmikaḷ Tēvāram* (1971). Here again the hymns about Citamparam are put first.

7. The legend that the Mūvāyiravar "never leave" the Little Hall is part of the same one in which they hear the voice of Śivaṉ when they are being counted. They were being counted because they had been to North India to perform a great sacrifice, but after the counting incident they took a vow never to leave the Little Hall again.

See Story 5 for a detailed analysis of the legend.

8. The name "Puliyūr" or Tigertown is frequently used to name the town. The name alludes to the legends that the goddess Kāḷi (Sanskrit: Kālī) once governed the forest in this region with her tiger. See Story 5 for discussion of this legend.

9. *Cuntara Mūrti Cuvāmikaḷ Tēvāram* (1971). Again the one hymn on Citamparam is placed first.

10. Cited in *Cēkkiḻār Nāyanār Purāṇam* by Umāpati.

11. See T. A. Gopinatha Rao (1919–20), Anbil copperplates of Sundara Cola, the fourth year, *Epigraphica Indica*, vol. 15 (Madras: Archaeological Survey), pp. 44–72, verse 18.

12. This story is from the *Tirumuṟai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam* by Umāpati. The colonial historians linked this story with the great emperor, Rājarāja I, and popular retelling today often follows that lead. As we will argue in Story 4, other historians now link the story with Ātitya I.

13. *Tiruvicaippā* (1974).

14. *Periya Purāṇa* (1974).

15. The legend books in Sanskrit (twelfth or thirteenth century) and Tamiḻ (fourteenth century) were written during this period of dramatic change. They are already concerned about the reputation of the priests. We will discuss them in detail in Story 5.

16. See Story 3 for details.

17. *Annual Report on Epigraphy* for 1934–35, inscription number 104. These reports on epigraphy have been published more or less annually by the Archaeological Survey, Madras, since 1887, and scholars use the numbering system of those reports as the way of identifying all South Indian inscriptions. So even if one copies the full inscription from the wall of the temple or from the archives of the Chief Epigraphist's Office in Mysore City it will be identified by the number given it in the *Annual Report* in which it was first mentioned. Older books on South Indian history often used a shorthand and referred to the number alone, so that the inscription referred to here would simply be "104 of 1934–5." More recent books integrate the inscriptional references with other references, so that we will always refer to *ARE* (for *Annual Report on Epigraphy*), followed by the year, and after a comma the number of the inscription. If the inscription is found in other sources, those references will come after the *ARE* numbering is provided.

It is possible that the families of Brāhmaṇas referred to in this inscription as employed by Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ could be ancestors of the Smārta Brāhmaṇa Aiyars employed by the Dīṭcitars even now for certain rituals. (See subsequent discussion.)

18. The Sanskrit guidebook for the temple pilgrims from North India, called the *Citamparamāhātmya*, was written about this time, and in accord with the overall strategy of Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ it portrays the priests as having migrated from North India when the Bengal king Hiraṇyavarmaṉ came to Citamparam.

Interestingly, the Tamiḻ paraphrase of this guidebook, called the *Kōyil Purāṇa*, written a century later by the temple priest Umāpati, corrects the impression that the priests were immigrants from the North, and argues that they were originally from Citamparam and only went to the North to perform a grand sacrifice.

See Story 5 for a detailed analysis of these two guidebooks.

19. Quoted in Heras 1927 and cited in Natarajan 1974, p. 59.

20. *Mackenzie Manuscripts*, pp. 1–3.

21. Arunachalam (1985, 1988) in a number of places sets out without any proof the ridiculous argument that Tipu Sultan took the original priesthood into exile and the priests never returned. He seems to have his history all tangled up.

The problems predate Tipu by a century. The Mughal armies arrived in the late seventeenth century, and it was at that time that an image was moved to Tiruvārūr for safekeeping, accompanied by half of the Dīṭcitars. The French and British armies used the temple in the 1740s and 1750s. Worship was carried on both in Citamparam and Tiruvārūr during this time. The image from Tiruvārūr was restored to Citamparam in 1773 according to the inscription in the Rāja Sabhā (Somasundaran 1955, p. 135, Natarajan 1974, p. 63, Swamy 1979, p. 80).

Later on Hyder Ali's conquests during the Second Anglo-Mysore War did apparently again disturb Citamparam around 1780, but when he died in 1782 that war was almost over and his armies had returned to Mysore. The Third and Fourth Anglo-Mysore wars with Tipu

Sultan leading the Mysore troops were in the western half of South India and did not involve Citamparam at all.

The impression Arunacalam tries to conjure up of Tipu as a bigoted Muslim ruler who *might* have taken priests into exile is an unfortunate byproduct of popular history writing. Serious historians of Tipu's rule now reject that portrayal, but in any case Tipu did not visit Citamparam.

Arunachalam's other speculation that the Dīṭcitars are just a group of Smārta Brāhmaṇas who took over the temple when it was reopened is also nothing but an effort to play on prejudice and the general anti-Brāhmaṇism of contemporary Tamiḻnāṭu politics. The Dīṭcitars do not normally refer to themselves as "Smārta Brāhmaṇas," and in fact employ a few families of Smārta Brāhmaṇa Aiyars for certain special tasks such as death rituals and Vedic chanting, which Smārta Brāhmaṇas are known to do well. (The court did use the category "Smārta Brāhmaṇa" when describing the Dīṭcitars in 1954 and 1981, but it probably was using the term in a general sense to mean something more like "genuine Brāhmaṇa.") The Dīṭcitars and the Smārta Brāhmaṇa Aiyars who work in the temple today are clearly distinguished, and are very self-conscious of their different heritages.

22. Sri Nataraja Kunjitha Dikshitar, secretary Podu Dikshitars of Sri Sabhānayakar temple of Chidambaram as representing the *Podu Dikshitars of Chidambaram v. The Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Administration) Department,* Madras High Court, 1981.

23. The sixteenth-century quotation from a Jesuit source mentioned earlier, for instance, specifically mentions that the priests are also "the treasurers" of the temple.

24. In a separate court case *(Samba Nataraja Dikshitar v. Kalyanasebesa Dikshitar, Madras Law Journal Reports,* 1968) the court commented that the temple property was "more like that of a mutt [*maṭam or Sanskrit: maṭha*]."

It is interesting that the comparison was made to a *maṭam* or monastic institution. The court obviously meant that Citamparam was like a *maṭam* in that the resident community is prominent, and because the government has never attempted to regulate the extensive property of *maṭams*, it seemed consistent to allow the community in Citamparam a similar status.

There are, however, three important differences between the Citamparam temple tradition and those found at *maṭams*. The first is that the temple in Citamparam is always open for public worship, even if the primacy of the resident community is clear. The second is that the residents of a *maṭam* are celebate. The third is that in the *maṭam* there is a rigid hierarchy of authority with one *ātīṉam* serving as both the spiritual and administrative head with all the other ascetics clearly subordinate, while in Citamparam the members of the community are equals and leadership rotates.

I have been tempted to describe the community of Citamparam as an *āśrama* in that ancient religious communities which used that name had married members and did practice equality among members much as the Citamparam community does. But those older institutions are not found any more, and the name "*āśrama*" is now used for a modern, less institutional, form of communal life such as Mahātma Gandhi advocated.

25. *Śrī Sapānāyakkar Kōyil Cattam* (1849) and *Śrī Sapānāyakkar Kōyil Cattam* (1894) are the rule books of the Dīṭcitars. (They were reproduced in 1966 by Pandian Press, Citamparam.) These rule books are still used by the Assembly, and the present practices still follow these books fairly closely. There is no way of knowing when the rules were drawn up, but it seems reasonable to think that they predate the mid-nineteenth century and probably evolved over a very long time.

26. The term "*potu*" means "common" or "community" and is interpreted by the Dīṭcitars as including the sense that they are all equal and that they are joint owners of the temple property and the temple traditions.

The term "dīṭcitar" comes from the Sanskrit "*dīkṣa*" or "initiation" (note that the local spelling of "Dīṭcitar" is a modification of the Sanskrit).

The Dīṭcitars undergo five initiations. The first four correspond to the four of the Śaiva Siddhānta school: *samaya* for beginners, *viśeṣa* for the higher grade, *nirvāṇa* for those ready for salvation, and *ācārya* for the teachers. The one unique to the priests of Citamparam is the *Paṭañjali Dīkṣa*, and it is described as a very secret rite.

(It should be noted that the name "Dīṭcitar" is used by many individuals who have no connection with this temple, but they or an ancestor has taken some initiation.)

27. This formal name for the temple is never used except in legal documents, formal announcements of the festivals, and the like.

28. For an excellent discussion of the standard pattern for management and priestly activity in a South Indian Śaiva temple, see Fuller 1984.

29. The contrast to the Ātiśaiva priests who serve in the other Śivan̲ temples of the region is worth mentioning. In those temples there is an obvious hierarchy among the priests, and the "head priest" is often notable for a gruff manner and the young priests are equally notable for their lack of training and their indifferent manner.

30. The communities now called "Smārta Brāhmaṇas" claim to be North Indian migrants brought into the area by various kings. They were settled in special villages (known generally as *brahmadēyas*, but during some periods called *caturvēdimangalams*) and were given the right to a percentage of the produce from certain lands. Some scholars have tended to suggest that most "Smārta Brāhmaṇas" were brought in by Cōl̲a kings, but in the Citamparam area most of these special villages were set up in the thirteenth century. That is, of course, when Muslim armies were making life difficult in the North. The two rulers who set up most of these villages in the Citamparam area were Cuntara Pāṇṭya and Kōpperuñciṅkan̲ (not the Cōl̲as), and, as we have already seen, Kōpperuñnciṅkan̲ employed some of these Brāhmaṇas for some ritual duties in the Citamparam temple.

The Smārta Brāhmaṇas today prefer to be thought of as scholars rather than priests, but most of them do a limited range of priestly duties. They are especially involved in domestic rites, as they are in Citamparam too. In Citamparam their role in temple ritual is more prominent than in most temples because the fire sacrifices for which the temple is known require a special kind of Vedic chanting in which these five families are especially trained.

31. See, for instance, Dumont 1970 for a discussion of the ritual basis for this hierarchical ideology.

One could try to explain the priestly equalitarianism at Citamparam in terms of Dumont's category of "parallel society," which he uses to describe the ascetics who provide the opposite ideology to the normal hierarchy of Indian society. One can find touches of equalitarianism in the Buddhist *sangha* or in the *akaras* of the Nāga ascetics, but most of the *maṭams* of Tamil̲nāṭu today are organized in a very "hierarchical" way. It is not obvious that the religious community of Citamparam follows a form of social organization that is part of an all-Indian pattern, and it seems more likely that it is a unique arrangement.

32. See, for instance, *Sakalāgama Sāra Sangraha* (1974) published by an organization for priests, the South Indian Archaka Sangham (Madras).

A number of "reforms" have been undertaken by the government and each has purported to retrain temple priests in the *Ākamams*.

33. These two texts were published together under the title *Śrī Cidambara Kṣetra Sarvasvam* (1977). At least one of the two texts was earlier referred to by Ramalingam (1963), who spoke of *Pūjāpaṭañjalam* and *Naṭarāja Nitya Pūjā Sūtram*.

In his passionately anti-Dīṭcitar article already referred to, Arunachalam (1988), an ardent advocate of the position that all priests should use the *Ākamams*, has argued that the

Citamparam priests "compiled their own manual from different sources and called it *Patanjali Paddhati*." He argues that they should follow the *Makutākama* because in a fourteenth-century poem entitled "*Tillaikkalambakam*" Irattaiyar referred to the *Makutākama* among the many features he loved about the temple.

34. This account is based primarily on observation, with a minimum of explanation from the priests. One can observe the worship ritual at close range, and I was even able to tape the mantras being recited, but the recitations were not clear and the priests were unwilling to provide a transcript of what they consider secret rituals.

In many other temples there seem to be only four worship periods.

35. In a fourteenth-century hymn Umāpati refers to this "Crystal Liṅkam." Both the image he describes and the rituals associated with it appear to be identical with those one sees today:

> I adore the Lord of the Curved Leg; the one who provided the priests a *liṅkam* of a *sphatika* [crystal] gem in order to do the bathing, for the well-being of the priests and the other devotees, when they worship the Lord of Dance six times each day. (*Śrī Kuñcitāṅghristavaḥ*, verse 15)

36. During the morning worship most of the worshipers are "regulars" whom one sees on a daily, biweekly, or at least weekly basis.

37. See Moody (1980) for details on the apparatus of Vedic ritual. In Moody's texts these ladles were called *suhartum* and *sucuman* respectively, but I have heard different names in Citamparam.

38. The "substitute" images used to carry the presence of Naṭarājan̲ during specific ritual ceremonies seem to represent well-established traditions, but do not themselves seem to carry much iconological significance. The "Crystal Liṅkam" used here, the anthropomorphic "Kalyāna Cuntaran̲" used a bit later, the "Ruby Naṭarājan̲" used a bit later still, and the "Somaskantan̲," which includes the mother and child as well as Śivan̲ and is used in festival processions, are all beautiful and significant images, but they are clearly "empowered" with the presence of the Naṭarājan̲ in the Cit Sabhā before each ritual act. They are in that sense carrying his presence in those rituals.

39. Umāpati in the fourteenth century described the ceremonial bath and listed exactly these items as part of the ceremony:

> I adore the Lord of the Curved Leg; the eternal one, whose *liṅkam* the great sages worship six times a day with the pure products of the cow (oil, milk, and curd), then honey and sugar, and then *pañcāmṛtam* [five sweet fruits], then lime juice, fruit juice, and coconut water, and then cooked rice, and finally sandal-paste water and Gangā water. (*Śrī Kuñcitāṅghristavaḥ*, verse 19)

40. This Rahacya (Secret or Emptiness) is a special feature of worship at Citamparam. It is never mentioned in early hymns, and would seem to be something introduced probably around the fifteenth century when the poems start to indicate that the Vedāntic interpretation of the worship was very strong.

See discussions of its meaning in Stories 3 and 6.

41. An inscription from Kanya Kumāri refers to this donation. See Natarajan 1974.

In the fourteenth-century hymn of Umāpati, which was written three centuries later, he suggests a more mythological origin of the ruby image:

> I adore the Lord of the Curved Leg; the one who wears a crown of nine gems and who provided a gem form of the original dancing image for the *pūja*. This image came out of the fire when Brahmā held the great sacrifice that lasted a thousand years in the Antarvedī and the Great Sages went there at the request of Viyākirapāta. (*Śrī Kuñcitāṅghristavaḥ*, verse 16)

42. In an important ritual change the Potu or Assembly of the Dīṭcitars agreed in 1990 that in the future the singers would be invited to sing from the Kanaka Sabhā if they wish to. Only time will tell if this ritual change will continue, and if the tone of deep reverence invoked by the older arrangement will be lost.

In any case the change represents an important victory for the non-*brāhmaṇa* led *maṭams* of Śaiva Siddhānta, which hold that *brāhmaṇas* should not hold a monopoly on the right to lead worship.

43. These two final acts of worship need some explanation.

In every Śaiva temple of South India, the final act of worship is directed to a small shrine outside the main shrine where the image of the saint or *nāyanar* Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ is placed. The story of Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ is that he was a young boy who went into an ecstatic trance while tending cows. He made a small *liṅkam* to worship and the cows too began letting their milk fall on the *liṅkam*. When his father arrived the boy accidentally killed him with an axe. In spite of the boy's great sin Śivaṉ took pity on him and told him he should never leave his side. In order to implement this promise, small shrines just beside the main shrine of Śivaṉ have been built in all Śaiva temples. Worshipers treat the image of Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ as the "manager" of the temple and ask his permission to leave when their worship is complete. Donors and management committees take this "manager" role quite literally, and in inscriptions formally ask Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ's permission to make changes in the temple. As it is the end of the day the priests and worshipers in this ritual are also asking permission to finish their worship. (The image of Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ in Citamparam is special because it has a four-faced Brahmā with it, and the two images are always worshiped together.)

The Bhairava shrine over to the eastern side of the first wall is a representation of the fierce form of Śivaṉ, and the Dīṭcitars claim some special kind of link with that fierce form of the deity—a form that is normally more commonly worshiped in North India.

44. The priests were unable to explain why so many of these special "marathon" recitations and fire sacrifices are held in the goddess temple. (Nor could they explain why others are held in the tiny Durgā temple just in front.) Perhaps the customs of some of the more independent goddesses such as Māriyammaṉ, at whose temples worshipers often make vows on specific matters, are creeping into the worship patterns of Citamparam.

See Younger 1980.

45. Story 3 describes the circumstances surrounding its original construction.

For some Śaiva worshipers unfamiliar with Citamparam, the status of this *liṅkam*, which is not the primary consecrated focus of worship, is still a problem, but most worshipers are familiar with the special arrangements of Citamparam.

46. This is the most important remaining example of worship being directed to the lower tier of sculptures on the *kōpuram* walls. It would appear that it was a more common worship pattern in the past.

For a description of the sculpture of the *kōpurams*, see Story 3.

47. The worship of Aṇṭāparaṇatēva may have been nothing but a pet project of Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ. Perhaps Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ tried to move the worship of Durgā from the temple, as we know he did the worship of Kāḷi. See Story 3 for more on Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ's many activities at the temple.

48. Śivaṉ as the destroyer of Yama or Kāla, the god of death, who was attempting to steal Mārkaṇṭeya, one of the devotees.

49. Śivaṉ as a Man-Lion-Eagle tearing open the Narasimha or Man-Lion form of Viṣṇu.

50. This image represents one of the important myths underlying worship in the temple (see Stories 3 and 5), where Kāḷi is defeated in a dance contest by Śivaṉ who performs his "wild" or *ūrdhva taṇḍava* dance with the leg high over his head.

In Story 3 we will see how the early practice of worshiping Kāḷi in the Nṛtta Sabhā was gradually done away with and the Kāḷi temple on the northern outskirts of the town was built by Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ in the thirteenth century. By placing a small image in the Nṛtta Sabhā, Kāḷi's earlier association with that shrine is recalled, without reestablishing it as a full Kāḷi shrine.

51. See Eck 1985.
52. See Younger 1982a and 1982c.
53. See Younger 1980.

Story 2

The Worshipers and the Festival Celebrations

Worship in South Indian temples is of two quite different types. As we have already seen the daily worship is usually a carefully defined and relatively quiet ritual pattern carried out by the priests with a few worshipers following along. The other pattern is that which occurs on the festival "holy days" or *tirunāḷ* when huge crowds mill about the temple courtyards and the images of the deities are carried around the public streets. An outside observer might think at first that the festivals are simply popularizations of the daily ritual, but many of the worshipers who visit the temple only at festival time see the festivals as having a distinct meaning and power of their own.

The special quality of the festival in the mind of the worshiper seems to rest in the awareness that temple worship has a two-part structure. One part is the daily worship in which the voice is the voice of the deity, the voice of awesome grace and cosmic order as expressed in the arrangements made by the priests on behalf of the deity. The worshipers join in this phase of the worship primarily to listen and to receive. In the festival worship, by contrast, the deity leaves his or her domain and enters into the domain of the worshipers, to be entertained, shown around, bathed, and honored. The voices expressed in this phase of the worship are those of the worshipers who, from their varied walks of life, squeeze in their particular messages before the deity returns to his or her own realm.

In the important temples the historical development of the two forms of worship seems to have been quite independent, with the daily worship pattern more responsive to changes in priestly and theological concern, whereas the festival pattern was more responsive to social, political, and economic change.[1] In Citamparam this distinction is particularly sharp because the temple is considered to be the domain of a special religious community with unique internal marriage arrangements and a unique set of rituals, and very few of those who make their living in the vicinity of the temple go there for their regular daily worship. The temple has, on the other hand, from its earliest beginnings allowed the Dancing Śivan̲ image to go out into the streets for festival activity, and the society around has developed a wonderfully varied set of festival rituals, which it carries out in order to express its reverence for the deity. At Citamparam, as at other major temple festivals, one can almost find a full social history of the region hidden in the symbols of the festival. One can, for instance, distinguish ancient customs which reflect an older hunting, fishing, or tribal culture. One can find medieval customs that show how the powerful Hindu dynasties between the ninth and fourteenth centuries introduced courtly symbols into the worship. And one can find more modern features that one can recognize as having been introduced within the past century or two. These patterns of festival activity interact with priestly reforms in limited ways, but they generally reveal more about the social and psychological life of the people living in that region than they do the theology of the priests.

The voices of the festival worship are many, and at first they sound like a chaos of street noises and are not easy to interpret. Their very variety, however, ensures that in them we are hearing the natural language of uninhibited human efforts to worship, and if that is true we should eventually be able to draw out the underlying grammar of the many voices. Some of the voices we will hear from in the festival had small roles in the daily worship as well. Hymn singers, drummers, and those who play the *nākacuram* or reed horn are there each day, but their numbers multiply manyfold at festival time, and special musicians, special pieces and special instruments express the joy of the worshipers throughout the day and night. The artists work on the images used every day, but at festival time, there are always new clothes, new carts, and new doorways that allow the crowd a new view of their beloved image. Kings and donors from the past are again heard from as the special gold and silver *vāhanas* or symbolic vehicles and the large wooden chariots and special halls are refurbished and again brought to life. The crowds of today somehow decide whether they are thrilled as an image of a fifth-century saint is carried backward before the deity, whether they are stubborn enough to walk the whole way to the seashore for the ancient celebration there, or whether their favorite moment is the bathing of the deity in the cool December air at four o'clock in the morning. The mythmaking poets and the sectarian hymn singers have determined the themes of many of the festival events, but at festival time some of the rituals are recounted in detail and others are carried out unnoticed. The priests still surround the deity, but they now carry out duties the crowds have determined will be theirs, and they are even reprimanded by the crowd if the deity is not allowed to remain in some position or other long enough. In the final analysis the individual voices fade into the background and it is the people's love of the chariot pull, the fireworks, the bath, the deity's marriage into a fisherman's family, the naked "beggar" image, and the respectful "greeting" in the kingly court that determines that those events will be in the festival and will be the pieces with which the symbolism of festival worship is constructed.[2]

A festival calendar is clearly a living and changing expression of the worshiping community, but it should not for that reason be thought of either as without logic, or as fadish and contemporary. Festival traditions have a deep conservatism about them, and the major festivals now celebrated in Citamparam are all mentioned in the earliest hymns about the temple and the earliest inscriptions on the temple walls.[3] This kind of conservatism is not explicit and political in character, but rather implicit and psychological, part of a communal logic. Worshipers are often a bit unsure of how to explain the meaning of a festival to an outsider, and frequently resort to stories of childhood memories in order to indicate the power with which the temple festival tradition holds them. It is as if the festival serves as the school in which a special symbol system is learned in a painless and only semiconscious way. The rules for learning the symbol system and the rules for changing the symbol system of the festival are rather like those in operation in the use of ordinary language. In some ways this makes the festival a flexible and apparently unsystematic and "slang"-filled statement of cultural meaning. At the same time it makes it a conservative statement that evolves very slowly, and does, therefore, rather accurately reveal the overall structure of the symbol system used in the temple. By contrast with the festival language, the other expressions of religion one discovers in a temple are like specialized works of high art, which use the language of the day but often speak in an idiom unique to a certain group or time. The festival with its many voices is often harder to interpret than the more specialized statements, but in the end it may well represent the oldest and deepest current of religious meaning associated with the temple.

The Worshiping Community

At one time Citamparam (then called "Tillai") was a coastal town facing out onto the Indian Ocean. The traditions of the temple seem to indicate that it was once linked up with the lives of seagoing traders, and the families of deep-sea fishermen who still live along the nearby coast. It is possible that the priestly community, which legend links with Bengal, even came to this area first by ship, but the twelfth-, thirteenth-, and fourteenth-century accounts of those legends were written up much later, after Citamparam's ties with the coast were made difficult by the growth of the *tillai* shrub forest, and after the economy of the area had turned to agriculture. Early references to Kaḷabhra kings residing in the town and Śrī Laṅka kings visiting the town probably relate to a time when the town was primarily a port and trade center. While the economic and social meaning of these early contacts with the coast have been gone for over a thousand years, there are still festival traditions that celebrate the sea, the seagoing trade, and the life of the fishing community.

The dry shrub-covered land around Citamparam was suddenly transformed into a center of intensive rice cultivation when irrigation was introduced into the area. Although we do not know exactly when that took place, we know it was somewhat later than areas further south, for it required the digging of the northern or Koḷḷiṭam branch of the Kāvēri River. In the seventh century Campantar still speaks of seeing the "waves of the sea" in nearby Tiruvetkalam, and one may presume that the saltwater channels to the sea were then open and not grown over with shrubs as they are now. He also visited a number of the agricultural hamlets that are still identifiable today, and so it would seem that by the seventh century the area was becoming involved in the intensive irrigation agriculture which is still practiced. By the eleventh century, when the temple had become a famous worship center supported by the Cōḻa rulers, fourteen of these agricultural villages were grouped with Citamparam (then called "Tillai") to form a *taniyūr* or "centrally administered district,"[4] and most of the fourteen villages listed there can still be identified.

The group considered to be the foundation of the social structure in the area today is the *rayats* or farmers who in this area are of the Vēḷāḷa caste. They know the problems of the agricultural work intimately and are not averse to working in the fields themselves, but because irrigation makes agriculture an interdependent system involving thousands of people over a considerable distance, the Vēḷāḷas are also very busy with problems of social organization, politics, and the support of institutions such as *maṭams* and temples. Vēḷāḷa families spend a great deal of time arranging their marriages so as to ensure the continued dominance of the major family lineages, many of which claim that it was their family that introduced irrigation agriculture to the area. The saint Appar came from the Vēḷāḷa caste, as did Cēkkiḻār, the individual chosen by the Cōḻa king in the twelfth century to pass along the Śaiva traditions at Citamparam. It was also from this caste that Meykaṇṭar, the founder of the Śaiva Siddhānta movement came, and that movement continues to be led by members of the Vēḷāḷa community, and Vēḷāḷas head up each of the Śaiva Siddhānta *maṭams*. The most prominent role Vēḷāḷas as a group play in the present-day festivals of Citamparam is when the young representatives of two hundred families attempt to carry the images of the deities in the major festivals of the months of Āṉi (June–July) and Mārkaḻi (December–January).[5]

A much larger percentage of the residents of the villages in the area are the low-caste laborers who work in the fields managed by the Vēḷāḷas. The men of this class generally work alone or with one or two companions in the tasks of plowing, clearing irrigation channels, lifting water from one level to another, and harvesting, thrashing, and transporting the rice. Each of these tasks has a special skill and status attached to it, and the responsibility is generally handed down from father to son. The women of this class work in large groups with much less status differentiation, and they do all the planting and transplanting of rice, as well as much of the carrying of headloads at harvesttime. These people are not expected to be vegetarian like their Vēḷāḷa superiors, but most people living in this immediate area are vegetarian out of necessity. Most of the worship of the laborer classes takes place at the small goddess shrines in their home villages, but they would not think of missing the two major festivals in the Citamparam temple, and they think of some of the processions as especially for them. The Ōtuvār caste, which has for centuries had the privilege of singing the Tēvāram hymns on behalf of the people, was originally a normal agricultural community, and the laborer groups are proud of that tradition. Many, however, of the agricultural workers have never entered the inner parts of the temple or attended the daily worship that takes place in that part of the temple because they have not quite forgotten that in an earlier day their caste status would have limited their freedom of movement inside the temple.

The townspeople of the region traditionally included the carpenters and blacksmiths who made carts and plows for the agricultural enterprise; the goldsmiths, workers in brass, and weavers who made the luxury goods; and the traders who kept the local economy in touch with the outside world. In the predominantly agricultural society these groups were all considered "service" groups (sometimes specifically set apart as members of "left-hand" castes)[6] and were acknowledged to have more physical mobility and more cultural opportunity than the agricultural castes. Once probably predominantly Jaina in their religious persuasion, during medieval times they gradually became highly orthodox practitioners of Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava religion, and generous donors to the major temples. In recent centuries much of the small-town business activity has fallen into the hands of the Muslim merchants who settled on the coast of this area some centuries ago. The major trade patterns of the area are, however, still controlled by the families of Ceṭṭiyārs who are famous for their vegetarianism and generous donations to Śaiva temples. The Citamparam temple has been especially looked after by the most prominent family among the Ceṭṭiyārs, that of the Rāja of Ceṭṭināṭu.

When in medieval times the temple of every town in this area grew into a major institution, a large population was employed by the temples themselves. The drummers, dancers, and musicians who served the temple were not granted a very high status because their work was considered somewhat demeaning, but they were provided with regular incomes, and in a town like Citamparam they were a major social unit. Brāhmaṇas were needed to serve as cooks, and as priests, and in many areas the North Indian Brāhmaṇas now called Smārta Brāhmaṇas were settled in separate villages to carry on their scholarly work.[7] The Citamparam area had a particularly heavy population of "Smārta Brāhmaṇa" settlements and also a large number of *maṭams*, music academies, and schools.

At the edge of this basically agricultural society there remained the fishing community, which probably was the oldest community in the area. While their members were not excluded with quite the vehemence the hunting peoples were in other parts of South India, the fishing communities were generally given low-status symbols and allowed to fend for themselves. Their very prominent place in the festival rituals of Citamparam probably indicates that they once had a more important place in the local society than they do today, but also indicates that they were able to convince the society over the centuries that it was important that they be included in Śivan̲'s cosmic symbolism, however marginal their status might be in human society.[8]

Over the centuries this predominantly agricultural society has changed very little. The pilgrim traffic has changed, the pattern of political interference has changed, and the trading community has changed from time to time, but the economic base of the region has remained much the same and the various segments of society have retained the central features of their role in the structure of the whole. The two main festivals, according to the fourteenth-century legend book, the *Kōyil Purāṇa*, were intended by the king to be an opportunity for this whole community to worship together,[9] and even today one has a strong sense of that purpose being fulfilled. The priests bring the image of the deity to the edge of the Kanaka Sabhā. The Vēḷāḷas struggle to carry the image through the temple and outside to the chariot. The male agricultural laborers pull the deity's chariot through the streets, while their wives pull the chariot of the goddess, and the children pull the chariot of Caṇṭēcuvaran̲. The fishermen arrange for the procession to halt for four hours in the northwest corner of the town in front of their homes while they celebrate the story of how Lord Naṭarājan̲ was married to a fishing family's daughter. Craftsmen make an ostentatious show of preparing the vehicles for the deity, while goldsmiths repair the jewelry and weavers prepare new clothes. Dozens of the best musicians vie for the honor of approaching the Lord with their music, and reports of an earlier day speak of the greatest temple dancers putting on their best performances.[10]

Ancient texts speak of Śivan̲ mocking social barriers, and when he takes the form of a naked beggar on the eighth day of the festival, the huge excited crowd feels the mockery once again as the high-class priests go along the street begging on the Lord's behalf. The festival says, as no human rights code ever could, that this is the god of those who plant rice in the fields and he is delighted to be in their midst. It is their day, but the barriers are not forgotten, and it is precisely because they are part of the hierarchical order of society and cosmos that people are so thrilled to be in such close contact with the Lord of the cosmos. Today all social classes can enter the temple, and the high-status non-*brāhmaṇas*, when the males remove their shirts, can even approach the deity on the platform of the Kanaka Sabhā, but everyone knows that it was not too long ago that laborers saw the deity only on festival occasions and Vēḷāḷas considered it a high privilege to approach the outer doors of the Kanaka Sabhā for carrying the image. The joy of the festival is not in the collapse of such barriers, but in the fact that the deity leaps social barriers and comes intimately close to anyone he chooses. This tone of intimacy and freedom is brought out beautifully in what is called the Flower Parade the day after the two major festivals are ended. The belief here is that the deity was restless and lonely after the excitement of the festival and wanted to once again be with his newfound friends. This time there is virtually no priestly ceremony as the image is again brought into the street and people make bold and actually throw their flowers directly on the image of their beloved Lord.[11]

The Earliest Festival: Māci Makam

The exact steps in the evolution of the festival calendar at Citamparam would be difficult to reconstruct, and the story that quest would uncover if it followed the literary evidence alone would be misleading because it would tend to highlight the one or two events with which some poet was fascinated and would not be able to show by what logic the different festival events were eventually interrelated with one another. Nevertheless, the references to festivals in the literature are sufficiently frequent that it seems worthwhile to describe at least the early festivals in accord with the sequence we learn about them in the literature.

The worshipers, priests, and ancient texts all agree that the much loved early festival of the temple was the pilgrimage to the sea held in the month of Māci (February–March) under the star of Makam.[12] What is probably the earliest reference to the festival is a passage in the *Tiruvācakam* of Māṇikkavācakar where he is describing his life in Citamparam in the presence of the deity and says:

> He asked me, a dog, to draw near to the glorious company of devotees in Tillai [Citamparam], and now he allows me to stay here. This is the place where the servants who were chosen to go with him found themselves made one with him,[13] while others sought him by entering the fire. Devotees seeking to be near him sometimes go into a trance, fall, roll on the ground, and wail as they rush along

> to reach the sea, weeping and crying out, "Our Lord! Our Lord!" Those who are able to come near cry in joy: "O Heavenly Dancer! O Lord who gave grace to Paṭañcali," and join in the yearning for a fullness of bliss as he dances with the crowd from Puliyūr [Citamparam]. . . . In this way the Lord of Kailāsa, where the rapturous sound constantly echoes, reenters Puliyūr, where the storehouses are full, like a king with his devotees crowding around.[14] (II.127–46)

The famous eleventh- or twelfth-century inscription of the Cōḻa general Nāralōkavīraṉ, in which he describes his many donations to the temple, explicitly refers to various provisions he made for what was then clearly an important festival. In verse 5, for instance, he refers to a garden he built "right up to the sea." In verse 6 he refers to a worship hall or *maṇṭapa* he built on the seashore "where the crests of the waves seem to beckon the worshipers to come," and to a road he cleared for the "*tīrthayātrā*" or "pilgrimage" of Naṭarājaṉ (a verse later in the inscription mentions that the pilgrimage is in the month of Māci). In verse 7 he says that he dug a large tank for water for the pilgrims, and planted a great banyan tree beside it to provide shade. Finally, in verse 12 he says that he provided lamps outside the southern gateway of the temple, the gateway that is especially associated with the Māci festival (it was the only proper gateway until the eleventh- or twelfth-century reconstruction of Nāralōkavīraṉ), and the one through which the Māci festival procession still proceeds.[15] These donations would seem to indicate that in the eleventh or twelfth century the Māci festival at the seashore may still have been the major festival of the temple.

A thirteenth-century inscription (*ARE* 1913, 153), which describes a routine exchange of land, identifies the location by saying that the land is "next to the temple of Piṭāri Tiruccirrambala Mākāḷi, on the south side of the road Vikkiramacōḻaṉ Terku Tiruvīthi, *by which the Lord Naṭarājaṉ is taken in procession to the sea.*" (emphasis added). Clearly the festival was at that time still a central event in the life of the region, and the procession passed by the (then new—see Story 3, below) Kāḷi temple on the northern edge of town.

In the fourteenth-century *Kōyil Purāṇa* legend book there is a rich and detailed description of the festival:

> Once upon a time the sea god Varuṇa wanted to wage war on a demon. As they approached one another in the dark of night Varuṇa threw his noose and the demon was killed improperly. For that sin Varuṇa's feet and hands were tied together and twisted over his neck. In this form he was thrown into the sea and suffered there for a long time. No one could give him relief.
>
> Because of this suffering rain became scarce, and both gods and humans approached Śivaṉ and the goddess and said "Please release Varuṇa from his sin and suffering." Then the Lord of the Golden Hall came to the roaring sea and by his grace cut the ropes of the Lord of the Sea. Anyone who bathes in the sea on that day is relieved of sin and has the blessing of coming near to the Lord. Therefore the golden flag is hoisted up on the Māci Makam day.
>
> On that day the Lord of the Sea, who always gives what is good, was given his boon by the Lord. Therefore on the nineteenth day of the month the festival should begin by making an offering to Vināyakaṉ of honey, shining fruits, *appam*, green gram, *aval*, etc., and everything should be arranged for the famous festival

> where the minds of those present literally melt. Indra, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and the other gods will be there, along with the heavenly damsels with their pointed eyes and their breasts held in long bodices. So will the forty-eight thousand sages, and the chief of the *gaṇas*, Narada, who sings the Vedas, and who was the one to say: "O Holy Dancer, please show your grace!"
>
> When the Lord goes in procession the devotees feel joy and shed tears of joy. Setting aside heavenly bliss the gods long to come for Śivaṉ's procession, and praising it worship with their hands folded. After they first bathe in the holy tank their presence decorates the route to the sea. As the herd of elephants in the procession enters the sea they look as majestic as a row of black clouds, and the noise of the crowd sounds like the roar of a great river. As the procession passes by, the clouds, which had been sleeping in the pine trees, suddenly rise up and the pine needles fall onto the flowers below, spilling honey like rain upon the road below. The humming of the bees in the flowers blends in with the chatter of the birds in every direction. The assembly of worshipers grows continually, and the tears from their eyes hang like strings of pearls. Around the trident of the Lord are the rulers of all the earth with their weapons and their armies. The gods play their musical instruments, and all the people of the earth perform their different duties as they worship.
>
> As if witnessing to the arrival of the Lord, the mountainlike waves rise up above the sky and bend their heads so as to toss the fish, the froth, and the boats around like gems, until they dash against the shore of the great roaring sea and climb up the sandy bank. In this way the Lord of the Sea welcomes the Lord whose feet could not be perceived by Viṣṇu. Now the Lord of the Sea clearly sees the lustrous form and is relieved by grace of his suffering, so that he worships using the waves of the sea as his folded hands. Everyone who bathes in the sea in front of the one who stands there with his ax has the bonds of *māyā* cut away and receives the grace of the Lord like the milk of the mother cow.
>
> The products from the East and from the West fill the ships on the roaring sea, which are brought by the hands of the long waves. There are nine kinds of gems, hoards of gold, incense, rich cloth, white yak-tailed fans, fragrant saffron, rose water, camphor, elephants from the mountains, etc. They are all placed around the feet of the one who gives life. At the *ghāt* or "step" [dock] called "Bond Cutter" the gods and the humans bathe and then stand on the sandbank while the noise of the people and the noise of the sea mingle with the trumpets. Then the gods and the *gaṇas* return along the waterways and the fragrant groves.
>
> Worshiping the feet of the Lord with the waves of the fertile sea, the Lord of the Sea [Varuṇa] asked: "O Lord, may we on this day have the boon of continuing this festival," and the Lord agreed. Then full of grace he departed. Then the Lord wearing the crescent moon returned to the Golden Hall.[16]

Umāpati, the author of this amazing account of the festival, was a well-known Śaiva Siddhānta theologian (see discussion of the tenets of this school in Story 6), and the emphasis on cutting the *pācas* or "bonds" of Varuṇa is in accord with Śaiva Siddhānta thought, where cutting the *pācas* of sin is the central act of the grace of God.[17] The mythology connecting Varuṇa and the sea is very old and is part of the Caṅkam classification of geographical regions.[18]

What is probably most important of all about this festival from the sociological perspective is that it continues a very early celebration from the time when Citamparam was a seacoast town and port with its primary symbols linking it to the sea. It is certainly quite probable that the community of persons who settled in this place, and continue to form the priesthood of the temple, came by sea from a place such as Gauda Dēsa in Bengal (see Stories 1, 4, and 5). Not only is there a continual string of references to Gauda Dēsa in the temple tradition, but we know that in the early centuries of the common era this coastline was in active contact with nearby Śrī Laṅka, with other seagoing peoples all around the Indian coast, and with traders from as far away as Rome and Indonesia.[19] While the sea came to be considered alien by the agricultural society that developed later, the temple tradition obviously took some pride in its earlier contact with the awesome sea.

The celebration of the Māci Makam festival in the temple today is only a pale reflection of its former grandeur. The route is now extremely difficult to follow because of the changing pattern in the backwater channels, and some of the many *maṇṭapas* along the way are now difficult to maintain and others are even bypassed as the route has changed. Even the southern passageway out of the temple was obscured when the "second" wall was built around the inner core (see Story 3 on the various building projects), probably in the eighteenth century, and did not provide for a proper southern exit. The eventual compromise was to have a loosely bricked-up doorway put in so that the procession in Māci now usually goes around by another way, but when a donor is prepared to have the doorway removed (the priests say "about every five years"), the Māci festival is celebrated properly and the southern passageway is used. Most of the present-day worshipers are no longer aware that Māci Makam was once the temple's major festival, but the fishing community of the region still cherishes the memory of Naṭarājaṉ's contact with its domain, which this festival recalls.

The Great Festival: Mārkaḻi Tiruvāturai

The festival held in the month of Mārkaḻi (December–January) under the star of Naṭarājaṉ, the Tiruvāturai, is considered the "great" festival of Citamparam. Its date corresponds with the winter solstice when the sun after a long period of decline has reached its farthest distance. In Indian astrology this whole period of decline is considered inauspicious, and the winter solstice itself is considered a moment of great danger. On the other hand there is a positive note and a note of deep excitement to the winter solstice, for like the hour of 4 A.M. to which it corresponds in the daily cycle, it marks the time of new beginnings as well.

There are two ancient features of the Mārkaḻi festival celebration in Citamparam, and both are centered on the exciting experience of bathing. The central event of this complex festival is the early morning bathing of the god and goddess which is now done with very elaborate ritual procedures on the morning of the tenth day. A very different kind of ritual event is the regular evening recitation of the *Tiruvempāvai* hymn of Māṇikkavācakar, which celebrates the ritual bathing women and girls all over Tamiḻnāṭu do in the cold morning air throughout the month of Mārkaḻi.[20] *Apiṭēkams* or "bathings" of a deity have become a common ritual form in temple worship including the daily worship of Citamparam, and the *apiṭēkam* of the king was an important part of the coronation service of medieval times.[21] In a similar sense the ritual bathing of women and girls in the month of Mārkaḻi is a very widespread practice, which many scholars think of as part of an early fertility ritual, which predates temple Hinduism.[22] Each of these ritual patterns is very well known in its own right and yet, in the context of this festival, they are each celebrated in special ways that seem to preserve a very ancient form. What is special about these celebrations is the way they preserve the naturalistic setting and the emphasis on the excitement associated with the coldest month of the year and the moment when the new "day of the gods" is about to dawn.

As the festival is now celebrated the two early features of ritual bathing and singing of the *Tiruvempāvai* are embedded in a host of other ritual acts with very different emphases. Among these other ritual acts are the constructing of Vedic fires, which are so often referred to in early hymns, and ten days of twice-daily processions, which became the standard way of celebrating a festival in all the major South Indian temples during the rule of the Middle and Later Cōḻas.[23] It would be impossible now to sort out the sequence in which these different features were added to the festival, and we will have to describe the festival as it is presently celebrated and then hope to reflect on its different features and their possible origins.

Preparations

Two days before the festival is to begin the Dīṭcitar priests go to the Vināyakaṉ temple in the third courtyard for special prayers of preparation because Vināyakaṉ is considered responsible for auspicious beginnings. That same evening they also present the special clothes prepared for the festival images to the deity in the inner sanctum. The next morning a child is asked to choose a name from a pot into which has been put the names of the hundred or so priests who are eligible to serve as head priest for the festival. That same evening the chosen priest, who has had no special training, is elevated to the highly honored position of head priest for the festival in a special initiation ceremony. For that ceremony he arrives at the Yāka Sāla or festival ceremony room in the northeast corner of the second corridor, the corner from where he will send off the festival processions as they come out of the Kalyāna Sāla immediately adjacent in the north side of the second corridor. The newly named priest arrives cleanly shaven and wearing the silken saffron-colored *dhoti* provided to the head priest, but he is obviously inexperienced and nervous. The most senior of the Śāstrikaḷ, whom we have earlier described as the Smārta Brāhmaṇas employed by the temple, calls the new head priest down to the floor of the corridor where the Dīṭcitar priest is instructed to sit facing north (the direction in which the priests face during the rituals of the inner sanctum as well), while the member of the Śāstrikaḷ sits to the northwest facing southeast. The Śāstrikaḷ member chants *mantras* into the water in a pot and then places *kuca* grass over the pot and breaks a coconut.[24] The priest-designate then stands and repeats some *mantras* and has a *raṭcapantaṉam* (Sanskrit: *rakṣābandha)* or cord tied around his wrist symbolizing the fact that he is bound to protect the integrity of the festival.

That same evening a representative group of priests goes to the different corners of the town to collect a variety of soils which are then mixed with water drawn from a number of sacred wells and ponds. Into the pot the priests place a variety of seeds, which will sprout during the course of the festival. This ancient fertility rite is not unique to Citamparam and is carried out before all major temple festivals and orthodox marriages in South India.

The best-known ceremony of preparation is the *koṭiyēṟṟam* or "flag raising," which draws over five thousand worshipers on the next morning or the first day of the festival. In 1980 astrologers determined that the flag raising had to be done between 6:30 and 8.15 A.M. to be auspicious, so the regular morning worship (which is still carried out during the festival) must be finished hastily. As the *koṭiyēṟṟam* begins, the folded flag is brought from the Deva Sabhā or priests' headquarters in grand ceremony with temple musicians and the newly initiated head priest in attendance. It is brought through the second corridor and taken through the southern entrance to the first corridor and on into the Kanaka Sabhā and the Cit Sabhā where it is placed before the deity. The Somaskantaṉ image,[25] which will represent the deity through much of the festival, is then brought from the Deva Sabhā, where it can be worshiped much of the rest of the year, and it is placed in front of the doorway of the Kanaka Sabhā facing the deity. As the *dīpams* or lights are shown and the Ōtuvārs sing hymns, the deity gives permission for the festival to begin and sets his presence on the flag and the Somaskantaṉ image. As the flag is then taken to the golden flagstaff outside the southern doorway, the Somaskantaṉ image and the other four images which will accompany it in all processsions are set around the flagstaff. Somaskantaṉ and the goddess are in golden *vāhanas* or vehicles on the west of the flagstaff, and their sons Vināyakaṉ and Murukaṉ are in silver *vāhanas* on the east, with the "manager" deity Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ[26] behind the sons in a wooden *vāhana*. A half hour of *mantras* are said by the Śāstrikaḷ representative who carefully instructs the head priest in the handling of the flag. The area is decorated with the auspicious stalks of young banana plants and the flagstaff itself is wrapped with holy *kuca* grass. The flag is an especially woven forty-yard-long white cloth with the symbol of an ox and a trident emblazoned on it. As a *brāhmaṇa* assistant carefully unfolds the flag, the head priest pulls on the cords until the flag rises above the roof of the temple. The remainder is then wrapped around the flagstaff and tied out of reach. Stories abound about the importance of having this flag rise uninhibited so as to symbolize the sovereignty of the deity and the king, and to ensure that the festival and the realm will run smoothly.

At the close of the *koṭiyēṟṟam* the head priest is taken in procession with the elephant and temple musicians and other honors normally reserved for the deity. With the large temple parasol held over his head he moves through the temple corridors and the streets to his home as people bow and put garlands over his head.

Later in the day when the temple reopens, the musicians who are to participate in the festival undergo a preparation ceremony. Back at the flagstaff a large crowd gathers as the head priest brings a special brass drum from the inner sanctum, which is reputed to have been donated by the bull Nanti especially for this festival. As the Śāstrikaḷ representative says *mantras*, the head priest briefly plays the drum and then presents it to a drummer who plays a special concert in an unusual beat, which is associated with this drum alone.

Later that evening in the final ceremony of preparation, the five images are taken out of the temple for the first time. When they reach the third corridor a much

Festival head priest (*nākacuram* player on right)

loved musical concert is played for about an hour. This concert is described by the large crowd as an emotional appeal for the deity to come outside the temple walls. Following the concert there is a carefully performed ceremony in which the entire priesthood chants together the prayers to the gods of the nine directions in order that they might protect the festival that is about to take place. This ritual ordering of space is even more explicit than the ordering of time associated with the rigidly enforced festival schedule. The first of the nine deities is Brahmā who is invoked inside the temple for he rules the center and has four heads looking in the four directions. Then the procession goes out the eastern gate to the street corner. There the head priest plants a trident and sets up an altar with some coconuts, rice, camphor, lights, and bells set on it. The Dīṭcitars then chant to Indra, the deity of the East, then two Ōtuvārs sing a hymn, the head priest makes his offerings, and the musicians play a twenty-minute concert as the five images wait. Then the procession moves along and the process is repeated addressing Agni in the Southeast, Yama in the South, Niṟṟiti in the Southwest, Varuṇa in the West, Vāyu in the Northwest, Soma in the North, and Iśāna (Śivaṉ) in the Northeast. As the procession breaks through an imaginary space barrier in each of the eight directions, a string of firecrackers across the road goes off. Far to the rear of the procession, a company of young Ōtuvārs sings hymns, a part of the ceremony that the crowd now ignores.

The Model of Devotion

South Indian temple festivals normally involve processions of images of the deity, but in the processions of this festival the procession is led by the model devotee, Māṇikkavācakar. One possible explanation of this special role for Māṇikkavācakar is that he is said to have entered the inner sanctum never to return, and is in that sense especially joined with the deities. It is also possible that the original impetus for this emphasis on the model devotee came from the old ritual tradition of Mārkaḻi which involved women and girls bathing in rivers and ponds during the chilling morning hours. Māṇikkavācakar wrote the twenty-verse hymn on that celebration entitled *Tiruvempāvai,* and the ritual of this festival continues to include a daily recitation of that hymn.

The recitation of the *Tiruvempāvai* is held in the evening at 5:30. The image of Māṇikkavācakar is brought from the Deva Sabhā accompanied by temple musicians. The image is then set before the front doors of the Kanaka Sabhā facing the deity just like a typical devotee. As a crowd of a few thousand gathers around, one of the oldest of the Ōtuvār moves to the side of the image and sings the first verse while Brāhmaṇa and Vēḷāḷa women read along in their books and others mouth the words:

> Even after hearing us sing of the rare and great Splendor who is without beginning or end, would you sleep on, O Lady with large bright eyes? Or are you deaf that you do not hear the praises that rise straight up from the Great God's ankleted feet? No doubt she hears the sound echoing all along the street, but in her trancelike sleep she turns and mutters and understands nothing. What is this, O you who would be our friend! O Woman, awake!

As the verse ends the temple bells are rung and the *dīpam* lights are shown, so that Māṇikkavācakar can see the deity, and all raise their hands in worship. This pattern is repeated for each of the verses as the tension grows, until in the ninteenth verse the girls repeat the devotee's vow:

> O Lord, we can only repeat the old saying that "we are but babes in your arms." Here we vow that "our breasts will be touched only by your devotees; our hands will work only for you; our eyes will see nothing in night or day but you." If you grant us the boon of seeing you, why would we care even if the sun did not shine?

And then after the final verse:

> Let us go for our Mārkaḻi bath! O woman, awake!

As soon as the last verse is sung and the image of the deity is worshiped with bells and with lights, the focus shifts to the image of Māṇikkavācakar. Now from the inner sanctum the deity sends food offerings and garlands to Māṇikkavācakar so that appreciation and adoration might be shown to him. Finally the bells once again begin to ring and the *dīpam* is shown, but this time in front of Māṇikkavācakar's image. The worshipers again raise their arms in worship. As the image of Māṇikkavācakar is taken up for the procession back to the Deva Sabhā, the crowd joins in with reverence.

The image of the young girls as love-sick and innocent is one that Māṇikkavācakar has borrowed from the Caṅkam period's *aham* or "love" literature, which carefully worked over this theme. What he has done with it is to turn it into an effective model of emotion-filled, but joyous, devotion. What the ritual of celebration then does with his image of the model devotee is to transmute it again so that

Māṇikkavācakar himself becomes the model devotee, still bearing the emotional craving for god's presence in his image.

Māṇikkavācakar's role as the "model devotee" of the festival is made even more explicit when his image is included in the morning processions. In these processions his image is carried backward with folded hands just in front of the divine images. In this dramatic way the whole idea of devotion is made the central motif of the festival as a whole. As the image of Māṇikkavācakar is brought out morning and evening it serves as a reminder throughout the busy festival schedule that the emotional worship for which he was well known is the proper worship of this particular festival season.

The Structure of the Days

On days two through nine the temple festivals of South India have, since the time of the Middle Cōḻas, had a reasonably similar structure with processions in the morning and evening and a change of theme each evening. Themes differ from temple to temple, but there is a fairly similar pattern in the larger temple festivals and the pattern of Citamparam is typical in this regard.

The duality in the patterning of the daily themes of the festival processions is fairly obvious, and is reinforced by the special pattern of musical pieces or *rāgas*, which for centuries has been prescribed for the concerts that punctuate the procession each evening. Day two focuses on the darker moon of fertility and day three the brighter sun of light and joy, so that on day two the five images are carried on silver *vāhanas* and on day three on golden ones. Following this same pattern day four features the dark figure of the ghostly Bhūta, and day five the lovely moving *maṇṭapa*, which stretches from one side of the street to the other as it moves down the street symbolizing infinity. Day six centers on nature's gentlest form, the elephant, and day seven on Śivan̲'s glorious triumph over the great king of demons, Rāvaṇa.[27] Day eight originally centered on the powerful horse (the procession is now pushed late into the night by the more popular Piṭcāṭan̲an̲ (Sanskrit: Bhikṣāṭana) celebration held in the late afternoon), while day nine involves the popular pull of the triumphant *ratha* or chariot. In the minds of the worshipers the dual nature of the symbolism is largely hidden and they speak only of "nervousness" or "sadness" on days two, four, six, and eight, and "joy" and "excitement" on days three, five, seven, and nine. Whether the duality of *aham* "love" and *puram* "heroism" that governed early poetic conventions played any role in helping define this duality it would be hard to say,[28] but the two patterns certainly resemble one another and a number of worshipers have commented on the resemblance to me.

A Special Visit

An important exception to the regularity of the processions is made in Citamparam on the eighth day when a third procession is inserted into the midafternoon period in order to worship an exceptionally beautiful image of Piṭcāṭan̲an̲, or the "Beggar" form of Śivan̲.[29] This procession could have been a very old form of festival worship over which the more structured pattern of daily processions was later superimposed, or it could be that an old form of worship was reintroduced at some point by popular demand and was just squeezed into the schedule during the climactic last days of the festival. In any case the story of Piṭcāṭanan̲ is part of the very oldest temple legends, and it recalls the time Śivan̲ and Viṣṇu decided to play a trick on the proud ascetics of the Tārukā (Sanskrit: Dārukā) forest.[30] When Viṣṇu disguised himself as the beguiling female Mōhinī and Śivan̲ took the form of the naked young beggar, the ascetics went into an erotic craze. This story became intimately associated with Citamparam because when Śivan̲ later challenged the ascetics with his cosmic dance, Viṣṇu was struck with wonder and later described the dance to his snake *vāhana* Paṭañcali, who then came to Citamparam to await the only performance of that dance on earth.

The image now used in the festival celebration of Piṭcāṭanan̲ is a relatively new one, which is an ornate production in gold leaf. The figure is dressed in garlands and scarfs, but is noticably "naked," and the reaction of the vast crowd has the tone of an erotic craze. While theological interpretations of each of the processions were available from the crowd, most found the Piṭcāṭanan̲ image the most profound of god's self-revelations. For the poor of the region, many of whom come for only this procession and the chariot pull the next morning, the image serves as a symbol of god's solidarity with them. For others it is the ultimate symbol of transcendence, the strongest statement that god does not bow to human categories and even delights in the role of beggar. For still others the celebration is just god's great joke: god's way of coming to the street and having a good time with those he loves.

God Joins in the Festivity

In South Indian temple festivals the deity is almost always represented by an *utsava mūrti* or a small "festival image." In Citamparam, as we have already seen, there are a number of such proxy images used both in the daily worship and in the first eight days of the festival. What is extra special about the Citamparam festival is that on the morning of the ninth day the true images of the god and goddess from the inner sanctum or Cit Sabhā join in the festival. This is a very rare occurrence and the cause of great excitement. The effort to bring the deity from the inner sanctum is a very dramatic event. Some of my own excitement when I first witnessed this event can be seen in the following present-tense description I prepared for my notebook.

> The ritual gets underway about five A.M. A huge crowd of over a hundred thousand gathers hours earlier and hundreds of policemen are employed to herd as many as possible into the galleries and porches of the temple so that the main corridor will be clear. As the moment nears two hundred young husky Vēḷāḷa farmers gather excitedly by the eastern doors of the Kanaka Sabhā. The tradition is that the deity, although only a three-foot-high metal image normally carried by six priests, has gained enormously in weight through the accumulated power of a long period of time in the holy shrine, and it is doubtful if any number of mortals can carry him. Two forty-foot-long timbers are placed on a special stand near the eastern doors. Most of the Dīṭcitar priests are inside the Kanaka Sabhā and Cit Sabhā preparing the deity. They have been engaged in that task all night after the special jewels

donated by kings over two millennia were taken out of the vault the previous day and set out to be examined in the presence of all the priests and a selection of *kaṭṭalai* donors.

Suddenly a flurry of activity takes place as the auspicious hour has arrived. The priests using roller logs edge the image out of the Cit Sabhā and across the Kanaka Sabhā porch. As the image approaches the edge of the porch they fling open the eastern doors of the Kanaka Sabhā and frantically wave to the Vēḷāḷas to take over.

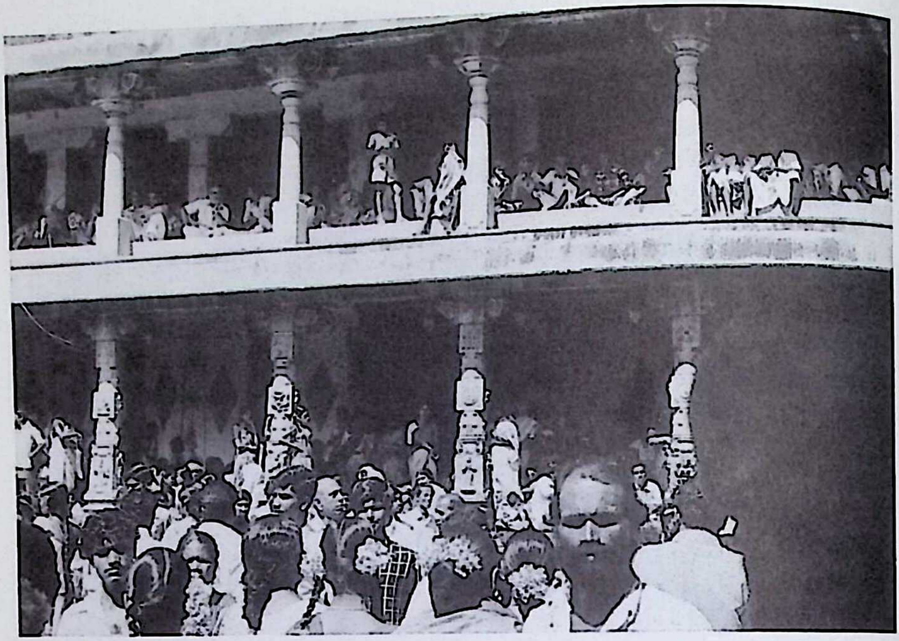
The two hundred young farmers crouch under the long timbers and lift, but there is no movement. Some priests in despair leap down to help them. Other priests wave and push. The crowd groans, and even the police look as if they are about to break ranks and try to help. At last the timbers move, and then, before the momentum can be controlled, the deity surges into view. As the crowd starts to worship, a cry of anguish goes up for the farmers careen backward and crash into the further wall while the image tips precariously to one side. The crowd is alarmed, but the priests, who have seen this all their lives, keep their heads and push and cajole the farmers into greater effort until they head back toward the shrine and the wall beyond it. This time the crash is less frightening and a measure of control is established as the image is held in the center of the courtyard.

Now the frantically busy priests order the Vēḷāḷas to stand still and rush back into the Cit Sabhā and bring the image of the goddess out by a similar, but slightly less unstable, process. Then both images are carried through the two inner corridors, and the crowds in the porches go into ecstasy. After two attempts to get up the ten steps through the Second Wall doorway to the outer corridors the Vēḷāḷas finally make it, and the huge crowds in the vast outside courtyards joyously greet the deity, unaware of the problems inside or the precariousness with which the image is still held.

Finally the priest who rides with the image in order to fan it and hold it stable realizes that quite a number of the Vēḷāḷas have fainted and that the danger of final collapse is real. He orders the procession halted and asks that one of the procession carts be brought so that the image can be placed on it for a few minutes. This gives the Vēḷāḷas some respite, so that when they pick the image up again things go somewhat better. When the image reaches the chariot a half hour later the priests reinstruct and assist the Vēḷāḷas, and the image is safely taken up the three flights of stairs to the chariot. The Vēḷāḷas who had been carrying the image of the goddess were without respite, however, and in their attempt to carry her image up the stairs some of them fainted and they came careening back into the street. Two attempts later they made it up the two flights to her smaller chariot.

As people wait for the great chariot pull, everyone discusses the excitement of the deity's emergence from the inner sanctum. Some think that there was human error, and either the Vēḷāḷas were poorly trained, the crowd had interfered, or the priests had done something wrong. Others speak emotionally of the deity's excitement on seeing the crowds, or of the deity's "dancing" at all times and in all places. All agree, however, that whatever the psychological explanations there was a mysterious weight involved at this point in the ritual, and it would not be present the next day when twenty priests would easily carry the image back inside.

During the day and a half that the deities are outside the inner sanctum there are three major events: the chariot pull of the ninth day, the *Apiṭēkam* or "Bath" in the early morning of the tenth day, and the Royal Audience at noon of the tenth



Festival crowd in galleries of first Pirakāram around central shrine

day. All three events attract over two hundred thousand worshipers and are full of significance, but the solemnity of the ''Bath'' is the high point of the worship year and was almost certainly the original core around which the festival was built.

The Chariot Pull

The chariot pull is dramatic because it involves the image of the deity from the inner sanctum going along the streets of the town. In form, however, it is familiar to worshipers old and new for similar chariot pulls constitute the climactic event of most temple festivals. In some temple festivals a great deal is made of the difficulties involved in the pull in that thousands of worshipers are pulling on block-long hempen ropes and the chariot wheels are often in poor repair and the streets are often rutted mud lanes. Turning the chariots can only be done with the timely use of wedges under the wheels and many chariots get ''stuck'' for days. In Citamparam great care is taken to ensure a smooth chariot pull, and while the excitement is high, the chariot normally reaches halfway around to the northwest corner before noon.

It is at the northwest corner on its trip around the outer walls of the temple that the chariot is halted for a few hours and the crowd watches with amazement while an ancient ritual recognition of the fishing community is carried out.[31] The local legend is that the goddess originally came from the fishing community of Citamparam and when the Dancing God arrived in the town he asked for her hand in marriage. Members of the local fishing community, which lives in this part of town, now consider the deity a returning son-in-law, and they bring gifts for him to the chariot. The priests let down a small rope and the gifts are tied to it and raised up to be set before the deity. This story is not now specifically tied to the many stories of Kāḷi as a local goddess linked with Śivan̲ in a variety of ways, but it has many of the same connotations of a lowly and local figure with deep roots being linked with the Lord of the Cosmos. What is more obvious in the circumstance of the festival today is that this event shows Śivan̲ leaping over the social barriers others still hold, and allowing those with the lowest status in the local society to be part of his celebration.

The Final Day: The Bath and the Audience

Most temple festivals end with the pulling of the chariot, but the second half of the chariot pull in Citamparam takes place in the evening of the ninth day in a fever of excitement, which will not diminish until the great holy events of the next day.

Most worshipers consider the bath or *apiṭēkam* of the images at 4 A.M. of the tenth day the most holy moment of the entire year. The scene is indeed very moving. The night before people begin to take their places before the grand steps of the Rāja Sabhā, which was once a Cōḻa audience hall. Most of those who come early are laborers who have bathed and come directly from work. Some sleep, but the silence is deep and awesome as the rest just wait. By 3 A.M. the corridor is full hundreds of yards to the south, but the families of the higher castes are now crowding in through the bamboo barriers and the workers are squeezing together to let thousands and thousands more in. Fewer than one in ten can even see the flickering torches in the distance, but everything continues in pin-drop silence.

Promptly at 4 A.M. the iron gate of the Rāja Sabhā is flung open and the torches along the huge stairway are lit. Moments later on the platform part way up the stair the curtain is pulled aside and the people in the crowd raise their hands in reverence at the sight of the images of the Dancing God, and the goddess who is to his left. The garments and jewelry of the images have been removed and they are clothed in simple white bath garments. The head priest of the festival nervously paces back and forth as he prepares for the greatest moment of his life. The young Dīṭcitar priest who will hand him the pots, a task done on a daily basis by the family of lesser-status *brāhmaṇas*, is even more nervous as he receives the last minute instructions of his elders. Finally they begin, and the priest pours golden pots of water, milk, curd, honey, sugarcane juice, a mixture of five fruits (*pañcāmṛtam*), lemon water, and coconut water over each image. He pours about ten pots of each substance as he carefully repeats *mantras*, bathing Lord Naṭarājan̲ first and then the goddess. Then he repeats the same procedure with the next substance. After about an hour the curtain is pulled and the clothes are removed and garlands put on the images for the next phase of the bath.[32] When the curtain is reopened the images are covered with perfumes of many kinds, after which they are more delicately bathed in apple juice, grape juice, and rose water. Finally, the most holy moment of all arrives when water brought especially from the Holy Ganges in North India is poured over the images. The curtain is then pulled again and new white clothes are put on for the bath in sandal-paste water. Again the curtain is pulled and clean garments are once again put on before the curtain is opened and the priest begins to show the *dīpam* lights one after another as people worship. As the ceremony ends, the crowd breaks rank and joins the mad rush to get even a drop of the precious liquids being handed out by the priests behind whatever makeshift barriers the police can erect to give them assistance. Somehow the priests still have bucketsful left for their regular clients.

Much could be said about the significance of bathing in South Indian temple worship generally and in Citamparam in particular. Probably the earliest notions had to do with the kinds of purification and erotic joy associated with the Mārkaḻi celebrations the women and girls still enjoy. The cold of the month of Mārkaḻi is thought to heighten the erotic joy of the bath, and worshipers frequently speak of how they imagine the deity "feeling" at this most sensual of moments.

Śaiva mythology provides another dimension to the bath in that the bath immediately reminds one of the story of Śivaṉ's rescuing of the world by catching the river Ganges in his hair as it fell from heaven, so that it would not destroy the earth below but would serve to bring it to life. This story was especially dear to the Vēḷāḷas who organized the irrigation system of South India, for in their view Śivaṉ was the water which in the form of the Kāvēri River brought life to their parched land.[33] Temple myths often developed variations on this theme, and even the royal inscriptions, which we will discuss in detail in Story 4, describe the king as like Śivaṉ in that he brings water and hence prosperity to the area.

The formal ritual of *apiṭēkam* gradually became the consecration ceremony of India, and was central to both the coronation of kings and the daily worship of temple images. The Citamparam ceremony has those formal aspects too, but the Mārkaḻi ceremony goes much beyond the formal ceremony in bringing to life the older dimensions of the symbol of bathing. No one participating in the worship of that early morning would have been unaware of the erotic quality of the season or of the mythical dimension of having the Ganges River brought to earth. Nevertheless, by the time the ceremony closes, the darkness is lifting and the great royal audience hall or Rāja Sabhā looms into view. The bath is, after all, in some sense a coronation. The dark, erotic, and natural dimension of the morning symbol of water soon gives way to the symbols of light, triumph, and joy as preparations for the royal audience of the afternoon get underway.

The royal audience, which brings the major festival of Citamparam to a close, is dramatically different from any other worship experience in South India.[34] The building used is actually the ancient royal audience hall of the Cōḻas, which is now reputed to be exceedingly holy and is kept carefully locked except at festival time. The audience chamber is actually the old marble-lined hall in which the emperor sat, which allows everyone in the wide room to have a clear view of the throne area. The worship ritual begins with hundreds of thousands of worshipers forming queues of males and females, which snake back for miles around the different temple courtyards. While the police make some effort to kept the queues in order outside the palace, after they get inside, where there are dozens of halls and room to pass through, the police are everywhere hustling people along and especially trying to get them to move on out of the audience chamber again. The audience chamber is actually a joyous chaos as at least a hundred Dīṭcitar priests try valiantly to recognize their clients or respond to pleas of other worshipers and make hurried offerings of coconuts, ash, and camphor lights, while quickly saying the appropriate *arccaṉais*. From the back of the audience chamber, which is as close as most worshipers get, the scene is one of grandeur and ceremony as the smoke from the camphor lights collects in the room, the huge sweeping fan is pulled back and forth by the family of *brāhmaṇas* who assists in worship, and the bustling Dīṭcitar priests continually raise lights in worship before the faces of the enthroned images.

As twelve o'clock approaches the crowd is suddenly turned back even though at least 75 percent are still waiting in the queues, because the auspicious time for the deity to reenter the inner sanctum has arrived. Now the pace quickens as the crowd willingly rearranges itself in the third courtyard where even more have arrived for the moment when the deity returns to the inner sanctum. Here the term "*darśana*" or "view" is given its most literal meaning, for there will be no ceremony and it will not be important to be close. What is important now is to have "been there," and every distant tower and stairway is packed, as are, of course, the inner porches and corridors as well. Eventually the twenty Dīṭcitars and Vēḷāḷas who have been appointed to carry the image back inside emerge from the Rāja Sabhā and slowly move along the walkway into the eastern doorway of the second wall as hundreds of thousands raise their arms with fingers together high over their heads in a moment of thankful, but sad, adoration. The other images, which had been waiting in the courtyard all day, follow inside and the police rush to slam the doors closed lest the crowd surge inside and crush the throng already jamming those areas. Quietly everyone in the huge throng brushes the tears away, and unwillingly turns toward

Festival crowd in third Pirakāram (as deities are heading back inside at the end of the Mārkaḻi festival) the exits. Out on the street the toy bazaar is busy and families slowly get organized for the long walk home.

The contrasting tone between the dark silence and quiet anxiety of the morning bath, and the bright joyous atmosphere of a busy audience chamber at noon could not be more dramatic. To the worshipers the dichotomy seems most natural, and they find it easy to describe. To them the "dark" and "light" contrasts of this day, like those in the alternating themes of the festival days or the poetic rules of the Tamil̲ language, serve to bring into its fullness the different moods that are natural to the human spirit. During the period of Cōl̲a glory the dichotomy was explicitly evident in royal pronouncements on inscriptions and other places, and was usually expressed by glorifying both the natural fertility of the land and the hegemony of the political order. For worshipers today the social analogues would be a bit different, but the Dancing Image would be read in much the same way as a wild mysterious presence full of hidden energy (the *ūrdhva tāṇḍava* or wild dance is much talked about) and a joyous cosmic balance in the presence of which we can relax and rejoice (the *ānanda tāṇḍava* or dance of bliss is the form in Citamparam). In the great Mārkal̲i festival the whole range of these different dimensions of the worship experience is played out in an elaborate set of interrelated activities, which provide a complete sense of the way the worshiper is related to the mysterious but wondrous presence of the Dancing God.

The social settings that found expression in the symbols of the Mārkal̲i festival are difficult to analyze because it has had so many packages of symbols added to it over the centuries. The original set of symbols would seem to be those associated with the winter solstice and the prospect of future fertility associated with the early morning bath, and water generally as a symbol of semen or productive seed for the barren land. Before the introduction of irrigation in the middle of the first millennium, the rain starved regions of Tamil̲nāṭu could only hope for what are still called the "winter rains" when a sporadic rain came in from the northeast and provided for a limited agricultural yield in February and March. When the rains did not come, the angry goddesses of the villages who represented the barren land brought smallpox and other plagues, but the goddesses and the young girls of Māṇikkavācakar's songs were wild with excitement at the prospect of Śivan̲ the god who brings the water from heaven being part of their new year.

This preirrigation sense of the fragile nature of agriculture has a highly erotic quality and a deeply devotional quality about it, which is still preserved in the festival symbols, with the excitement associated with the early morning bath and the use of Māṇikkavācakar's image as an expression of abject devotion carried backward in front of the divine images. At the same time the festival also has a heavy dose of courtly symbols, which would have been introduced somewhat later when the Cōl̲a court was directly involved in the worship system of Citamparam. These courtly symbols were introduced after irrigation agriculture had given the area a more reliable economic base, and they lend the festival its tone of prosperity and triumphant grandeur, which contrasts so poignantly with the tone of mysterious wonder associated with the bath. Although these two sets of symbols come from contrasting periods of agricultural development and reflect rather different senses of the degree of human dependence on the divine, they are actually woven together rather beautifully in the festival proceedings. Here the human worshiper moves from moments of dark mystery to moments of triumphal joy in a wonderful exercise that expresses the full range of ways one feels about the divine and its role in human experience.

Organizing Sacred Time: The Balance of the Festival Year

The festivals of Māci and Mārkaḻi I have described probably initially emerged as isolated celebrations that responded to certain seasonal and social situations in the period before the temple became closely associated with the Cōḻa Empire. What became the predominant religious theme during the Cōḻa period between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries was the emergence of a prosperous irrigation economy and the symbolism of cosmic ordering associated with the royal court of the Cōḻas. The direct impact of these cosmological concerns on the festival system of Citamparam was twofold. First of all the king ordered a near duplicate of the Mārkaḻi festival to be performed in Āṉi (June–July), at the beginning of the primary growing season for irrigated fields, when most of the temple festivals in the region are held.[35] And, as a further marking of the order of the year, four smaller *apiṭēkams* were established at regular intervals in the calendar so that each of the six divisions of the year was celebrated.

The popular understanding of the way the calendar year is divided is that the six months between Mārkaḻi and Vaikāci (May–June) is the "light" or auspicious half of the year, and corresponds to the first half of the day ("a human year corresponds to a day in the life of the gods"), whereas the period from Āṉi to Kārttikai (November–December) is the dark or inauspicious half of the year.[36] There are many important religious events in the dark half of the year, but issues having to do with fertility, such as marriages and agricultural festivals, tend to be concentrated in the light or auspicious half year. In addition to the consideration of auspiciousness, the early months of the year are also convenient for celebrations in the agricultural community because the fields lie fallow until the rains come in June and July.

In the *Kōyil Purāṇa* of the fourteenth century it says that the king ordered the temple to have a second great festival in Āṉi patterned on the one in Mārkaḻi. In the legendary context established for the *Kōyil Purāṇa* the king involved is said to be Hiraṇyavarmaṉ, but one could imagine any one of a half dozen of the Cōḻa kings as likely to have given such an order. The selection of Āṉi probably involved two considerations. On the one hand, it fit in with the ritual pattern of other major temples of the area that had their major festivals in the "festival season" between Paṅkuṉi (March–April) and Vaikāci (May–June). By setting the Citamparam festival in Āṉi it could be advertised as the climax of the festival season and the last festival before the monsoon rains. The other consideration was quite different and was directed more at priestly concerns rather than those that would affect the general public. Because the other major Citamparam festival was set in Mārkaḻi, which is the first month in the "light" half of the year, it would provide a perfect balance to have another festival in Āṉi, the first month in the "dark" half of the year. The

Āṉi festival is now celebrated with almost identical procedures used in the Mārkaḻi festival, except, of course, that the parts of the Mārkaḻi festival associated with the *Tiruvempāvai* of Māṇikkavācakar are omitted in that they are uniquely related to the Mārkaḻi season, and the timing of events is changed somewhat. Most worshipers now speak of the "two great festivals of Citamparam" and most attend both, but to some the sacredness of the Tiruvāturai "star" or *nakṣatra* in Mārkaḻi is considered superior, and to others the role of the *Tiruvempāvai* in the celebration makes the Mārkaḻi festival the more important one.

Although the Mārkaḻi festival is recognized as the most important one at Citamparam, the Āṉi festival brings the Citamparam temple into the festival mood associated with the irrigation agriculture society and its wider festival pattern. In Story 4 we will discuss more fully the probable dates for the development of irrigation agriculture and the political impact it had as first regional powers or *nāṭus* came into being and these in turn led to the development of a very powerful ritualized confederacy under the Cōḻas starting in the ninth century. In the course of this development hundreds of stone temples were constructed in each region or *nāṭu*, and an elaborate system of worship was introduced centering on the marriage alliance of Śivaṉ and the various regional goddesses.[37] The festivals of these temples emphasize the themes of fertility and cosmic ordering, and contain a very positive tone consistent with the prosperity that irrigation agriculture and Cōḻa rule had brought to the region. The Āṉi festival is celebrated just a week or two after the festivals in nearby towns, and its tone of thanksgiving for the prosperity of the season is very much like that in the other festivals around, even though many of the ritual events are carried out in much the same way as they are in the Mārkaḻi festival.

In order to complete the calendar ritual of the year, the temple tradition at some point introduced four "minor" *apiṭēkams* for the images. These celebrations are held in the Kanaka Sabhā platform just in front of the inner sanctum and are completed in one evening. They are moments of great reverence for the few thousand who attend, but they are not understood as full-fledged festivals. What they do is to round out the year into six segments, corresponding to the six worship periods in the daily ritual. As in the daily worship, where the first worship of the day and the first after the temple has been closed for the afternoon are the most prominent, so too in the festival cycle are the first in the bright half of the year and the first in the dark half the most prominent. Thus the Mārkaḻi festival *apiṭēkam* is followed by lesser *apiṭēkams* in Māci (February–March) and in Cittirai (April–May), and the Āṉi festival in the second half (or "afternoon") of the year is followed by *apiṭēkams* in Avaṇi (August–September) and in Aippaci (October–November).

Organizing Sacred Space

There are four occasions when images of the deity are taken outside the immediate environs of the temple, and it should not be surprising that each of these trips is in one of the four cardinal directions. The most important of these is the trip already described as the ancient trip to the seacoast in the month of Māci. This, of course, is a trip to the east, which is the direction of the gods and the most important of the four.

The trip to the west takes place in the month of Vaikāci (May–June) and involves a visit to the Anantēcuvaran temple on the western edge of town. The term "Ananta" is another name for Paṭañcali and carries forward the legendary story that Paṭañcali settled in the western side of the sacred tank to await the dance.[38] The actual temple tradition of the Anantēcuvaran seems to be very old, and stones in the temple bear inscriptions of the earliest Cōla kings Vicayālaya and Parāntaka.[39] It was this part of town where the largest early settlement occurred. In accord with the traditional arrangements in the area, the temple has for centuries been managed by a proud Vēḷāḷa family, which is now assisted in the ritual by a Dīṭcitar family and in the administration by government-appointed officers.[40] The festival celebration now involves the bringing of the Kalyānacuntaran festival image of Naṭarājan from the Naṭarājan temple in the midmorning, and the serving of a major feast in the courtyards of the temple. In addition to the link with the legend of Paṭañcali, the festival allowed Naṭarājan to be hosted by the most powerful Vēḷāḷa family in the region.

The trip to the north involves a visit to the tank in front of the Kāḷi temple.[41] Again the legendary connections between Naṭarājan and Kāḷi are numerous and the thirteenth-century building of this temple by Kōpperuñciṅkan was clearly an attempt to provide a limited opportunity for the worship of Kāḷi outside the town boundaries. The temple has thrived in this atmosphere and continues to be considered a place of distinct sacred power served by a Vēḷāḷa family and a Dīṭcitar family. The festival preserves the carefully limited relationship between this temple and the Naṭarājan temple in that the Kalyānacuntaran festival image is brought only to the water tank, and offerings from Kāḷi are sent there so that the Naṭarājan image is not actually taken into the presence of Kāḷi.

The trip to the south takes place in Āṭi (July–August) and involves carrying the Kalyānacuntaran image to a *maṇṭapa* or worship hall on the banks of the Koḷḷiṭam River. This river is an artificial branch of the Kāvēri River, which was dug to bring irrigation water to this far northern edge of the delta. At the time of the festival the river is in spate from the monsoon rains, and the festival provides an opportunity for thanksgiving for the whole agricultural community.

Regular Śaiva Holy Days

There are a great many Śaiva holy days celebrated throughout South India, and each of these is celebrated in Citamparam as well. In Citamparam, however, there are so many festivals that the celebration of some of these regular Śaiva holy days tends to blend into the overall pattern of worship with little that is unique or special to Citamparam. In other cases a special link with the Citamparam tradition is highlighted, and it is these links on which we will focus our discussion.

One of the most important Śaiva holy days is the one held in the month of Tai (January–February) on the Pūcam *nakṣatra*. Tai Pūcam is especially associated with Citamparam for it is on this day that Paṭañcali was finally able to witness the wonderful dance of the Lord. The celebration is now a full-fledged "festival" and includes a hoisting of the flag and ten days of processions with the five images used in the first part of the Mārkaḻi festival. The images from the inner sanctum are, however, not brought out for this festival.

In Avaṇi (August–September) on the Mūlam *nakṣatra*, the Piṭṭu festival is held. This festival recalls the incident in the life story of Māṇikkavācakar where a flood occurred in the Vaikai River, and everyone was ordered to build a section of the dike. A widow hired a laborer to do her section and brought him the dish *piṭṭu* to provide him with food. When the king found the laborer sleeping, he beat him, only to find that Śivan̲ had come in the disguise of that laborer, and the beating was really administered to god. In the celebration the Kalyānacuntaran̲ image is taken in procession and a mock "beating" is enacted, after which *piṭṭu* is provided to all. This celebration is, of course, much more elaborately done in the Maturai temple, which is just near the Vaikai River.

In Purattāci (September–October) the all-Indian celebration of Navarātri or the "Nine Nights" is held. An interesting part of the celebration of this festival in Citamparam is that an elaborate *apiṭēkam* of the image of the goddess Śivakāmacuntari is held in her own temple on each of the nine evenings before her image is carried in procession to the front steps of the Deva Sabhā, where she is gently swung until early morning by women and girls singing softly. On these nights the priests on duty in the inner sanctum of Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲ bring the *dīpam* lights to the Deva Sabhā and worship the Śivakāmacuntari image in the swing. Her image is, however, never taken any closer to the inner sanctum than this second corridor porch of the Deva Sabhā, thus preserving the tradition, that the image of the goddess who is always inside the inner sanctum is the one worshiped along with Naṭarājan̲.

The Durgā Pūja that climaxes the Navarātri is celebrated in the tiny Durgā temple in front of the Śivakāmacuntari temple, and in the Kāḷi temple to the north of town, but it is not as such part of the ritual of Naṭarājan̲. A similar arrangement is involved in the Āyuta Pūja or "Weapon Pūja," which follows on the next day and is now very popular throughout Tamiḻnāṭu, in that priests are involved in blessing modern "weapons" such as motorcycles, tractors, taxis, and account books, at the temple gates, but there is no recognition of the celebration within the inner sanctum.[42]

Another popular Śaiva festival, the fire festival held in Kārttikai (November–December), probably represents an ancient tradition where a grand bonfire burned away the dross of the dying year just before the beginning of a new "day of the gods" in Mārkaḻi. The Śaiva mythological explanation of the festival is that the bonfire is the fiery *liṅkam* that the rival deities Brahmā and Viṣṇu tried unsuccessfully to find the top and bottom of. The grandest celebration of this festival is in the Tiruvaṇṇāmalai temple, but in Citamparam too all homes are brightly lit and bonfires are held at the four entrances of the temple.

The Festivals of the Other Deities

Before concluding our story of the festival celebrations of Citamparam, some mention should be made of the many festivals of other deities that somehow fit into the sacred calendar of Citamparam. One of these is the festival of the goddess Māriyammaṉ held a block to the east of the Naṭarājaṉ temple, which does not involve either the Dīṭcitar priests or the temple compound of Naṭarājaṉ, but is still included by most worshipers in their descriptions of Citamparam festivals.[43] It now imitates other festivals in that it has a flag raising and ten days of processions, but is notable mainly for the fact that the poor laborers, who are fond of it, often go into deep trances during the wild dances that follow the night processions.

Similar in many ways to the larger one at the Māriyammaṉ temple a month later is a festival held at the Kāḷi temple in Cittirai (April–May), which is said to "start the festival season." Dīṭcitar priests do officiate at this festival and the legendary links to Naṭarājaṉ are brought out.

The festival celebrations of the Gōvintarājaṉ shrine just in front of the Naṭarājaṉ shrine are very subdued. The priests of both shrines speak of past disputes, which they now avoid by careful scheduling. Natarajan (1974) describes a settlement of 1796 giving the Vaiṣṇavas the right to use the Hundred Pillared Hall for their festivals, and one in 1867 in which the Vaiṣṇavas were forced to promise not to celebrate their big festival or Brahmōtsava.[44] The festivals are now celebrated in a quiet way, and no ritual links with Naṭarājaṉ are established in any of these celebrations. The background of this awkward relationship will have to be taken up in Story 3 on the different buildings, but there is no longer noticeable tension over festival activities and many worshipers are delighted that they can worship both images at the same time.

The three deities that are mythologically linked with Naṭarājaṉ as family members each have festivals in their honor. Śivaṉ's oldest son, Vināyakaṉ, enjoys a festival all over India in the month of Avaṇi (August–September) on the Catturti *nakṣatra*. In places such as Mahārāṣtra this is the major festival of the year. In Citamparam it is not celebrated as a major festival, but the celebration that does take place is quite moving in that it involves an elaborate *apiṭēkam* of the image in the southwest corner of the third corridor, which, when donors are available, includes a recitation of the *arccaṉai* or prayer one hundred thousand times by a team of Dīṭcitars.

The festival celebration of Śivaṉ's second son Murukaṉ is a major festival with a flag raising and ten days of processions out of the grand temple of Murukaṉ in the northwest corner of the third corridor. This temple was built by the Pāṇṭya kings when they conquered this region in the thirteenth century (see Story 3), and the festival still centers on the military side of Murukaṉ's personality. The final day's celebration features a mock battle between the image of Murukaṉ in his warrior form as Skanda Śasta and the demon Sūramaṉ. With the images set facing one another in the street south of the temple, a company of the traditional warrior caste of Mutaliyārs arrives in traditional battle dress bearing swords. As the story is recited, the Mutaliyārs cut off each of the demon's five heads, but they grow back because of a boon he had won earlier after he had performed great penances. Finally the demon gives in and becomes the peacock on which the deity rides, and with the deity mounted on his back he is carried around the temple as the crowd cheers in triumph. The day after the festival is officially over the celebration continues with the ritual involving the marriage of the deity with the goddess Tēvayāṉai, the daughter of the great god Indra.

The final festival to be described is the festival of the goddess Śivakāmacuntari held in the month of Aippaci (October–November) on the *nakṣatra* of Pūram. The structure of this festival involves the usual raising of the flag, careful *apiṭēkams* of the image, and processions. Most worshipers join only for the last day of the festival, which involves a bath in the great Śivagangā tank just in front of the goddess temple, and the day after the festival, which involves a marriage ceremony with the deity. The bath is a wondrous affair in that the worshipers all seek to bathe along with the image of the goddess in the gigantic tank.

The marriage the following day is carried out in accord with the most orthodox of marriage rituals. The day begins with the image of the goddess being taken to the Jñānaprakācam tank on the southern edge of town where she is prepared for marriage. After bathing in the tank she is taken to the *maṭam* nearby, which is now run by a Śaiva reform group from Śrī Laṅka.[45] In a ceremonial goodbye with her family, she apologizes for marrying Śivan̲, presumably because he is from a lesser lineage. She then proceeds to the temple's east side where the Somaskantan̲ image is brought, and they exchange garlands in the traditional ritual of agreeing to marry. Then both images are carried into the temple to the porch of the Deva Sabhā where an elaborate Vedic marriage ceremony is held. Finally the images of the married couple are taken out of the temple and carried in procession about the town with their heads uncovered just as other married couples are shown to the community.[46]

Tamil̲ proverbs contrast the consort of the deity in Maturai, where the goddess Mīn̲āṭci is fiery and independent, with the consort of the deity in Citamparam, where she is the model of a quiet and supportive wife. The odd thing about these proverbs is that they do not recall the legends of the completely independent Kāḷi, who was only subdued when she was lured into a dance contest with Śivan̲, or the very erotic relationship imagined in the *Tirukōvaiyār* hymn of Māṇikkavācakar. What the proverbs do pick up, however, is the total submission portrayed in the worship associated with Śivakāmacuntari after her own temple was given prominence by Nāralōkavīran̲ at the end of the eleventh century. It is not clear what could account for this emphasis on submission, but it may well be that the presence of a strong Kāḷi tradition needed suppression. Also the fact that the temple was built at the beginning of the Cōl̲a Empire's third and most conservative phase may have brought about this emphasis on social harmony and ritual order expressed through very orthodox marriage bonds. The love of the more passionate tradition of Kāḷi worship continued on, and Kōpperuñciṅkan̲ was forced to provide her with a temple outside of town a century later, where worship still flourishes. The main tradition of Citamparam, however, focused on cosmic order and the peaceful *ānanda tāṇḍava* dance, and it made sense that such a conservative emphasis linked up best with the image of a consort who was a wife in the most orthodox and traditional sense.

Conclusion

Festival life in Citamparam is an exceedingly complex set of activities, which are very difficult to understand when they are first observed. The priests' book on the festivals is not much help in that it only contains an uninformative listing of the many duties that the priests are expected to carry out each month.[47] What one finds, however, when one comes to know the temple tradition better is that these many festival activities represent a richly layered painting of worship traditions. Initiated more or less spontaneously, a particular tradition is then carried on with loving care by those whose own specific worship preferences we may not ever know, but whose respect for traditions is evident in the energy they provided for the celebration of the festival. Looked at in this way we can recover much from this multilayered scene, and if we cannot provide the exact dates when certain traditions came to life, we can at least watch that life as it bursts into full flame and then remains on as living embers to enrich that which was yet to come.

Clearly the earliest layers of this wonderfully textured pattern are the two festivals that almost seem to predate what we would now think of as festival ritual. The Māci pilgrimage to the sea is so natural in its reverence for the mysteries of the great ocean and its attachments to the peoples who live across the sea that it does not even seem like a part of temple worship. The story of Varuṇa no doubt linked it at some point with familiar mythological traditions, but the sociological meanings it invoked were no longer relevant when the agricultural society started looking inland to the irrigation channels. The festival probably only survived because the stubbornly conservative traditions of the priestly community were not prepared to relinquish a memory of how they once arrived by sea. The Mārkaḻi bathing of the images was also probably once part of a simple fertility cult carried into the present in the ritual bathing women and girls still do during that month. As the festival developed it added many other feature with many other emphases, but the anxiety involved in the young girl's first dip into the mysterious depths of the cool waters still pervades the festival in a special way.

A second layer of reverent thought goes into the festivals with the cosmological ordering that fit so well with the orderliness of an irrigation system, and was seen in its highest expression in the ordered ceremony that characterized every form of behavior during the imperial rule of the Cōḻas. The structured symbolism of the festivals is now taken for granted, but the hoisting of flags, organizing of processions, and arranging of themes in an orderly ten-day sequence clearly comes from an age of imperial organization and its accompanying cosmological theorizing. Whether the dichotomies of "dark" and "light," "fertility" and "heroism," "nature" and "culture" that one can discern in this patterning was prescribed by the leaders of society or subconsciously developed by the people from earlier patterns of thought would be difficult to say. While the organizing principles in this layer of development are less natural and spontaneous than those in the earlier layers, they should also not be interpreted as artificial celebrations or "parades" suggested by state officials. Even in this more ordered structuring of the events one senses the presence of the people demanding that their role in the overall agricultural enterprise be acknowledged—for example, that their caste be able to carry the deity or their part of town be able to celebrate a marriage with the deity. Here each activity ends up culminating in the glorification of the whole society and all segments of society are brought together to form a harmonious unit in worship, yet the moods of wonder and anxiety we saw in earlier festival symbols are never quite lost but are in some way enriched and reexpressed in the new forms.

A third layer of understanding is introduced when the calendar is completed and every hour of every day becomes linked with a host of different spiritual forces. Now mythology rather than either nature or symbolic dichotomies becomes the medium of expression, and the stories become more and more elaborate and intertwined. Necessarily diluted for the popular taste that governs the festival, astrological detail fades to the background as a few *nakṣatras* become favorites. Using this astrological background to orchestrate smoothly, the festivals begin to mix together many myths. Here a figure such as the Piṭcāṭaṉaṉ or Beggar form of Śivaṉ can be called upon quickly to remind the great crowd that, although it no longer enjoys prosperity and the imperial grandeur that once accompanied irrigation agriculture, the deity also understands the role of the "beggar," and even more the humor that allows him to leap from one social role to another. Śivaṉ's family helps enrich the myth with a wife who is an embodiment of patient virtue and sons who embody wisdom and military prowess, but the underlying symbol of the "dance" is the most versatile of all as it allows for stories of wild energy, and a quiet bliss or *ānanda* which fades off into a secret (*rahacya*) emptiness beyond all human categories. During the centuries after the Cōḻa Empire fell, it must often have seemed doubtful whether the festivals would continue to be celebrated, but in the end it was when political instability and economic uncertainty were the worst that the festival provided a setting that could give coherence to all the longings of the worshiping community.

As the centuries go by, the constant repainting of these more basic layers goes on, but little is permanently lost as new coatings of meaning are carefully added. Perhaps some day the currently favored forms of popular worship, such as the Ayyappaṉ chanting, the Māriyammaṉ trances, or the Āyuta Pūja blessings of modern "weapons," will be woven more closely into the festival activities. For now, however, the voice of the present-day worshiper is heard in Citamparam against a great chorus of tradition, and the new is accepted only hesitantly, only when it is abundantly clear that it has found its rightful place in the great chorus of the past.

Notes

1. Some of my earlier research focused on temple festivals, for instance, Younger 1980, 1982a, 1982c.

2. It is fascinating to note, for instance, which parts of the festival are considered important in the festival manual that the priests use: *Śrī Chidambara Kṣetra Sarvasvam*, vol. 2, (*Śrī Chitsabheśotsava Sūtram* (1982).

The royal audience on the last day of the two major festivals is, for instance, not even mentioned. Presumably this was because there are no specific ritual functions the priests are required to carry out during this part of the celebration. Nevertheless, to the people who come to worship, the royal audience is clearly one of the high points of the festival.

3. The very earliest inscription, for instance, (*ARE* 1888, 118) from the eleventh century speaks of the great festivals in the months of Āṉi and Mārkaḻi, the same months as they are celebrated today. It describes the temple dancer, Nakkan Paravaiyar, as providing an endowment to feed one thousand worshipers during the festival.

4. *ARE* 1888, 118. Natarajan (1974, p. 3) provides a list of twenty-three contemporary hamlets, many of which correspond more or less with the fourteen of the original list. Among the better-known villages in the *taniyūr* today are Korraṅkuti, Minikuti, Tiruvetkalam, Karikuti, Vikrama Cōl̲a Nallūr, Vikrama Pāṇṭya Caturvēdimangalam, and Cuntara Pāṇṭya Nallūr.

5. For a fuller discussion of the Vēḷāḷa's irrigation system and its cultural and political implications, see Story 4 on the temple donors.

6. For a discussion of "left hand" and "right hand" castes see Beck 1972.

7. Karashima 1984 provides a fascinating account of the differences between normal villages and the *brahmadēya* villages in which the Smārta Brāhmaṇas lived, especially as regards things such as land holdings, village councils, and the like.

For an indication of some of the major *brahmadēya* villages attached to Citamparam, see Story 4 on the patterns of religious donation.

8. A full social history of the fishing communities of South India needs to be written. In areas such as Śrī Laṅka where their numbers are larger, they have considerable political influence. In many areas of both South India and Śrī Laṅka, they became Roman Catholic converts when the Portuguese missionaries arrived in the sixteenth century. In the area around Citamparam where agriculture was very prosperous, they became a fringe community.

9. *Kōyil Purāṇa* 1968, verses 385–97. This important legend book about the temple will be fully discussed in Story 5.

10. The priestly manual on festivals explicitly mentions the role of temple dancers at specific points in each festival. Their work was considered a necessary part of the ritual.

11. This observation, and many others throughout this chapter, is based on the author's fieldwork, which was first carried out in 1980, but reconfirmed in subsequent visits to the festival.

12. The way of identifying festivals in South India is in terms of their month and special "star" or *nakṣatra*. Most devout people follow their *Pañcāṅkam* or Almanac very closely, and know the festivals of their usual temples of worship and of other important ones.

13. This reference is almost certainly to the legend repeated in the *Kōyil Purāṇa* and other places, which was that when the priests took a count of their number after returning from the sacrifice in North India, they found that there were only 2,999 of them, not the legendary 3,000. A voice from heaven spoke up and said "I am the three thousandth, I am one with you." (See Story 1.)

14. Vanmikanathan (1971) and Navaratnam (1963) 1975 both take this passage to refer to inner longings for the "ocean of death," rather than to a real festival at the seashore. I would think that someone familiar with the festival would almost certainly take it as referring to the festival.

15. *ARE* 1888, 120; *South Indian inscriptions* 4.225.10.

16. Verses 398–410.

17. See Sivaraman 1973 for a full discussion of Śaiva Siddhānta theology.

18. See, for instance, Ramanujan 1967.

19. Sastri (1935, 1955) 1975.

20. This lovely custom has recently been renewed by some women reformers who use the occasion for training young girls. It has also attracted considerable scholarly interest as well.

21. A symposium at the American Academy of Religion Meeting in Boston in 1987 discussed all forms of *apiṭēkam* and took for granted that the royal ones were the earliest. I would think otherwise, but the history of the ritual would require a great deal of research.

22. Pope (1900, p. 103), Filliozat (1972), Yocum, (1982, p 63), and Hardy (1983, p. 414) all take for granted that the ritual activity predates all of the literature that provides the hymns now used in the celebration.

The fact that both the Śaivas (*Tiruvempāvai*) and the Vaiṣṇavas (*Tiruppāvai*) have hymns to be sung during this season has intrigued many scholars. One has even argued that the two authors, Māṇikkavācakar and Āṇṭāl, were probably contemporaries (Filliozat 1972). If the ritual that inspired the hymns was indeed popular and as widely practiced as it is today, there would seem to be no surprise that both religious communities produced hymns for the participants in this ritual. In that case the dates at which the two collections were produced is also not of central importance, for one was not responding to the other so much as meeting a very popular demand.

23. My earlier articles on festivals (listed in note 1 of this chapter) demonstrated this general pattern in a number of locations. It is amazingly consistent from temple to temple, in spite of the special features of each location.

24. This use of water pots and *kuca* grass is very consistent wherever there is a Vedic based ritual vow.

25. As we have already seen in connection with the daily worship, the deity is represented in different ritual settings by a variety of images that are temporarily empowered for that ritual. Later in the festival now being described the actual image from the inner shrine is brought out in procession, a feature of this festival that is almost unknown either in Citamparam or in other temples. For the first part of the festival, however, the representative of Dancing Śivan̲ is a Somaskantan̲ image, which includes Śivan̲ with the goddess and the baby Murukan̲. This image was very popular in medieval temples of South India. (Although the image includes the goddess and Murukan̲, it is referred to as "Cuvāmi," "the Lord," and a different image of the goddess usually accompanies it.)

26. Caṇṭēcuvaran̲'s role in South Indian Śaiva temples was briefly described in Story 1. The story is that Caṇṭēcuvaran̲ was a Brāhmaṇa boy who wanted to care for some untended cows. While tending the cows, he made a small *liṅkam* of clay and the cows stood over it and let down their milk in worship. His father came to reprimand him for wasting milk, and while in a trance of devotion the son struck the father on the leg with his axe and the father died. Although the boy was guilty of the greatest sin of patricide and in deep grief, Śivan̲ was moved by his devotion and said Caṇṭēcuvaran̲ should never leave his side. To give symbolic credence to this order, temples began building small shrines for Caṇṭēcuvaran̲ just outside the shrine of Śivan̲, and the custom arose of considering Caṇṭēcuvaran̲ as the temple "manager" and even issuing land grants and other documents in his name.

27. The symbolism that gives such consistent attention to Rāvaṇa is not easy to explain. It was, of course, also present in the hymns of Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar, there again often in verse 7.

28. See, for instance, Kailasapathy 1968 or Ramanujan 1967.

29. The exceptional popularity of this ritual is difficult to explain. The erotic and comic elements are, of course, strong. People seem to think that it is a very old ritual tradition and conveys in a most profound way the nature of Śivan̲.

30. See Story 5 where the use of this story in the legend books of the temple is discussed.

31. This ritual is not mentioned in the priests' manual. The social significance in the present-day festival is not powerful in that the fishing community is now very weak in both numbers and influence, but it is therefore all the more striking that the ritual is continued.

32. In Story 6 we will discuss the famous poem of Appayya Dīṭcita, which centers on the deity's suffering from cold in this early morning bath.

33. In my article from 1982b, I discuss the way in which the symbolism of the Tiruvān̲aikkā temple establishes a balance of "water" and "land" with Śivan̲ seen as the bringer of water and the goddess as the provider of land and fertility.

34. As noted earlier the royal audience section of the festival is not mentioned in the priests' manual, presumably because it includes no specific ritual activities, other than the *arccan̲ais*, which can be brought before the deity at any appropriate time.

35. In some of my earlier articles on festivals I discussed features of the "festival season" in Tamil̲ religious life (1982a, 1982c).

36. This analysis of the year as corresponding to a "day" of the gods has been standard since medieval times. See Merrey 1982.

37. For an analysis of one of the better known of these temples, see Younger 1982b. Somewhat earlier in the season one has festivals of the sometimes angry local goddesses where the fear of barrenness is still strong and the emphasis is on propitiating the goddess (Younger 1980).

38. A full discussion of this myth will be part of Story 5 on the legend books of the temple.

39. Balasubramanyan (1943, 1944) when he first discovered these fragments felt that they were on stones that had once been in the Naṭarājan̲ temple. Even if they had been, they would have been removed to this site during the Nāralōkavīran̲ renovation in the eleventh or twelfth century, but there is also the possibility that they were original in this temple.

40. See Mudaliar 1976, for a description of the system of government administration of temples.

41. A full discussion of the circumstances surrounding the building of this temple will be part of Story 3 on the different buildings which are part of the temple complex.

42. A sociological study of the implications of the contemporary popularity of this festival would be most interesting. It seems to be the basis of a new "work ethic."

43. My 1980 article studied one of the busiest temples of Māriyamman̲.

44. Natarajan 1974, pp. 75, 62.

45. This *maṭam* in its present form was founded by the great Śrī Laṅka reformer Arumukan Navalar in the nineteenth century.

46. It is notable that both this marriage ritual and that linked with the Murukan̲ festival are held the day *after* the festival.

47. Śrī *Chidambara Kṣetra Sarvasvam*, vol. 2, *Śrī Chitsabhesotsava Sūtram* (1982).

II

WOOD AND STONE

Now that we know a fair bit about the present-day worship patterns in Citamparam, we are prepared to look at the building in which the worship takes place and see what it tells us about earlier patterns of worship. The priestly community feels comfortable in the many buildings of the temple complex, but even it is puzzled by the location of some of the crucial buildings and doorways, and is willing to wonder out loud whether worship was once carried on differently. The crowds of worshipers at the festivals all know of the Cōḻa kings and their fondness for this temple, but they wonder which of the many stories they have been told about kings and queens they should believe.

In looking at the buildings of the temple complex for evidence of earlier patterns of worship in Citamparam we will first be using art history and inscriptions to give us an idea of the sequence in which things were built. Art historians know in some detail what styles are associated with what eras, but they find a temple complex such as Citamparam with dozens of different styles covering almost two millennia exceedingly difficult to characterize and have not given it their primary attention. Political historians have also read enough of the 20,000 inscriptions of South India to figure out the dates of the major rulers, but a relatively small percentage of the 320 inscriptions on the temple walls at Citamparam were carefully analyzed in the course of those investigations.

What we plan to do in the present study is to first of all proceed chronologically through the evidence available on each building project that took place in Citamparam. In the first study, Story 3, we will concentrate on the building itself and the place it seemed to have in the total complex of Citamparam at the time. In most cases we will be able to discern what changes the new building would have made in the ritual procedures of the place, and we will try to describe the new patterns of worship or cult that were introduced.

In the second study of this material on the building, which we will undertake in Story 4, we will go beyond the building itself and examine the donors involved in the building project, and try to understand their social and political interests, and their reasons for attempting to bring about a change in the worship system of this temple complex. This study will take us through the social and political changes that have gone on around the temple over the centuries, even as its tradition of worship continued to keep many of its central features.

Story 3

The Builders and the Building

The initial impression a visitor to the Citamparam temple now has is one of remarkable aesthetic vistas and a pervasive sense of peace and joy. The great gateway towers or *kōpurams* go about 150 feet into the air and provide a striking view from quite a distance away. As one enters one of the great gateways, young priests can be seen here and there welcoming visitors and quietly going about their ritual duties. It takes quite a bit of time before one is prepared to listen as the priests innocently explain that one building is an ancient royal hall now called the Rāja Sabhā, that the beautiful porches of the water tank are from the eleventh or twelfth century, and that the small building with the unique gold shingled roof is the central shrine.

It is only on a second visit that one begins to arrange the many buildings in one's mind. With some help from the priests, one soon figures out that, like most South Indian temple complexes, Citamparam is characterized by a series of concentric rectangular walls with the central shrine of Lord Naṭarājan̲ at the center. Scattered in the walkways or *pirakārams* between these concentric walls are the four other ''major'' shrines and the ten ''minor'' shrines which are important enough to be attended by priests. But no sooner does the pattern start to become clear than unsolved problems appear. Even as one starts to ask about one or two of the puzzling features of the temple the young priests join in and begin to share their own unanswered questions about the mysterious set of buildings they care for. Why are the four gateway towers, which appear at first to be in the center of the four walls, placed at somewhat different positions on the walls? Why is the *liṅkam* shrine crowded into the second walkway? What was the original purpose of the hall opposite the central shrine, which is now called the Nṛtta Sabhā? Why is the great temple of the goddess so far from the central shrine? Why is the central shrine made of wood?

The only way the wonderfully complex puzzle of the many buildings in Citamparam can be sorted out will be if each can be studied in chronological order so that the new building project can be seen against the background of what was there before it. A careful study of the art of the four gateways has been made by J. C. Harle,[1] and some scholarly attention has been given to one or another of the more artistic shrines,[2] but no other scholar has, to my knowledge, attempted to establish the sequence in which the entire complex was developed.[3] Establishing the historical sequence is especially important in the case of Citamparam because there were so many different building programs, and because the reputation of the temple shifted so dramatically between some of the building projects. Because most of the major building projects involved major shifts in ritual behavior, we will attempt not only to explain the new project but to figure out what the implications of the new building were for the overall cult or worship experience of the place.

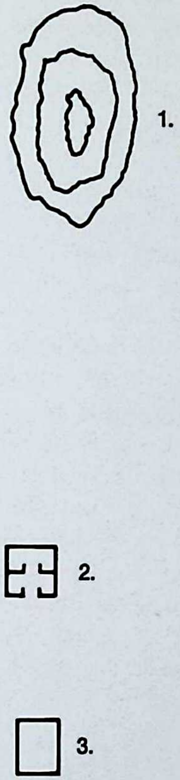
There appear to be six distinct periods in the art history of Citamparam. The early period was between about 300 and 850 C.E. ("The Thatch Hut") when the temple was in the middle of a dense forest and had only a thatch roof. The second period was the time of the Early Cōlas between 850 and 950 C.E. ("The Golden Roof") when the founders of the Cōla Empire adopted the temple as their family shrine and used the gold from their conquests to place a gold shingled roof on the old temple structure. After a century when the Cōla rulers built royal temples beside their palaces elsewhere, a third period in the art history of Citamparam emerged when a new branch of the Cōlas under Kulōttuṅka I and his successors between 1070 and 1225 ("The Full Complex") had the temple in Citamparam laid out more or less as we know it today and used it extensively in the royal ritual. The fourth period corresponds to the time of imperial competition, which accompanied the decline of the Cōlas during the thirteenth century ("The Orthodox Śaiva Revisions") when the orthodox Śaiva pilgrims from North India were a major influence on the building programs the different political contenders put up. A fifth period emerged after the Muslim invasions when the Vicayanakaram rulers of the sixteenth century ("The Sectarian Additions") had a couple of notable changes made in the temple in accord with particular religious interests of theirs. And, finally, in the period since the sixteenth century ("The Renovations") a steady stream of renovations has been undertaken for the comfort and safety of the worshipers, but the sanctity of the older ritual patterns has not been directly challenged by major new building projects. Each of the first five periods involved new builders and important changes in the concept of the building. Each period also involved changes in the ritual function or cult associated with the temple, and as we describe the changes in the building, we will try to identify the cultic changes as well.

Period One: The Thatch Hut (300 to 850)

The Temple Tank

The early period in the life of most worship places seems to "reach far back in time," well before the time when a stone temple is constructed. In Citamparam this period of "prehistory," before stone walls and inscriptions are available, is particularly difficult to sort out. On the one hand the temple is not mentioned in the *Cilappatikāram* or the *Maṇimēkalai*, epics from about the third and the sixth centuries respectively. This silence does not necessarily prove that the temple did not yet exist, however, because those epics tell particular stories located in regions well away from Citamparam, and never give lists of temples. On the other hand the temple is mentioned in passing in stories of Kaḷabhra kings who are usually placed between the fourth and the sixth centuries.[4] Tirumūlar, whom tradition dates

DIAGRAM ONE



Period One: The Thatch Hut
1. Temple Tank
2. Cit Sabhā (Ciṟṟampalam)
3. Nṛtta Sabhā (Etirampalam)

in the third century, and Māṇikkavācakar, whom tradition dates in the fifth century, both wrote beautiful hymns on the temple, but the dates of those two saints are disputed by modern scholars, and they cannot be used as undisputed proof that the temple was functioning as early as the third century. In any case, by the time Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar wrote their hymns in the seventh and eighth centuries, the temple traditions were long established.

The location of the temple is also difficult to explain. Most South Indian temples are located either on mountain tops or in population centers along the banks of rivers. Citamparam is different in that it is in a lowland surrounded by backwater channels from the Bay of Bengal a few miles distant. It is about five miles from the Veḷḷaru River to the north and about five miles from the most northerly branch of the Kāvēri River, called the Koḷḷiṭam, to the south. The region was on the periphery of the different political spheres into which South India was traditionally divided, with the result that quite a number of different powers claimed control over it at different times. The much feared Kaḷabhra kings of the early centuries of the common era made it their base of operations for a time; the Pallava Empire of the next few centuries included it in their domain; the imperial Cōḻas from the ninth century on made it their northernmost city; and from time to time even Śrī Laṅka and Pāṇṭya kings made claims on it.

As alluded to briefly in Story 1, the legendary explanation for the origins of the temple as well as the priesthood is that severe ascetics were attracted to the place because the forest of *tillai*[5] shrubs that once surrounded it, and still covers the five miles between the town and the seacoast, was thought to constitute the most uninhabitable place on earth. The *tillai* shrub, which grows in tangled masses on the banks of the backwater channels of the area, produces beautiful flowers but is a formidable challenge for humans, not only because of its tangled and impassable stocks, but also because the milk-bark of its broken branches is poisonous. As the legend would have it a wandering ascetic from North India took up the challenge of the *tillai* forest and was soon living on the banks of the pond of water that now constitutes the main tank of the temple complex. The first ascetic is reputed to have developed claws like the tigers who dwelt in the forest, and he used them to climb the trees and pick the flowers for worship. Soon other ascetics joined him and a worshiping community developed.

Following this legend the worshipers think of the sacred tank of water as the first holy "building" in the temple complex. This large body of water is now 275 feet long and 175 feet wide, and is called the Śiva Gaṅgā Tank. Its beautiful porches were added in an elaborate rebuilding of the temple in the eleventh or twelfth century, which will be described later.

The Cit Sabhā

The first true building on this worship site would seem to be the sacred central shrine, which is still at the heart of the temple. This shrine is now called by the formal Sanskrit name Cit Sabhā or Hall of Consciousness. In all the early hymns and inscriptions of the temple, the shrine was called by the Tamiḻ name Ciṟṟampalam or Little Hall, and it was spoken of with great affection as if it were a wondrous child. In some Sanskrit hymns that early Tamiḻ name was rendered literally as Dabhra Sabhā or Little Hall, and reflection on its meaning was developed in terms of the *dahara* or "the minute," the seed of the divine planted deep in the heart.[6] The more formal name Cit Sabhā came to be used in medieval times, possibly originally as a mis-hearing of the Tamiḻ "Ciṟṟampalam" by Sanskrit-speaking worshipers who heard the "tr" sound in the pronunciation of Tamiḻ "ṟṟ" as a "t" and began calling it "Cit-ampalam" or Hall of Consciousness, and then "Cit Sabhā." Once the theologically rich Sanskrit word "*cit*" or "consciousness" was associated with the place, that new name became the object of new reflections on the meaning of "ether," "space" or *ākāśa*, and "divine consciousness."

Tillai tree

The present shrine was presumably not the ascetics' first effort at building a sacred structure, but it is certainly a very ancient structure which was very early in the tradition revered for its unique features. It is a small rectangular building twelve feet deep and twenty-four feet across, with its only door on its long southern side, which is considered its front side. It is a wooden building and its roof is thatch-styled and is now covered with gold shingles. The three features of being rectangular, wooden, and thatch-styled are now quite unknown in Tamiḻnāṭu temples (except for halls that imitate Citamparam) because the Drāvidian style, which became dominant in this area when stone temple construction began in the eighth century, involved a square inner shrine and a pyramidal or dome *vimāna* covering. Wooden temples continue to be built in Kerala on the west coast of South India, and in Bengal, Nepal, and Kashmir in the north of the subcontinent, but the styles presently found in those places are somewhat different from that of Citamparam.[7]

Only two other examples of the Citamparam style are known and they are found in sculptured replicas of actual temples. One was found in a relief panel from Nāgārjunakoṇḍā, just north of Tamiḻnāṭu, and dates from about the third century. The other is the rock-cut temple of Draupadī found in Mahābalipuram in the northern part of Tamiḻnāṭu, where rock-cut replicas of a number of temple styles were cut out of large boulders in the seventh century.[8] These two examples, where sculptors just happened to leave us artistic models in stone, would seem to indicate that the wooden temple style found at Citamparam was a style with which they were familiar.

Exactly what the style of the Cit Sabhā in Citamparam should be called is a matter of some dispute among art historians. In one medieval book on architecture from South India, the rectangular form is said to be the defining characteristic of the *nāgara* style,[9] but the threefold division of temple styles into *nāgara, vesara,* and *drāvida* was never uniformly defined by the medieval texts and other texts do not always associate the rectangular form with the *nāgara* style. Art historians have tended to define the three styles in terms of a general geographical division, and have usually held that the *drāvida* temples are found in the south, the *vesara* in the center, and the *nāgara* in the north of India.[10] If one felt that the medieval South Indian text that defined the rectangular temple as *nāgara* was credible, and also that the general argument that *nāgara* temples were typical of the North should be followed, the question remains whether there is any reason to believe that this temple style from North India could be borrowed for use in Citamparam and a few other places in the South.

The Citamparam temple legends, which we have referred to a number of times already, do indeed provide an explanation for how a North Indian temple style might have come to Citamparam. We will deal with the full legend at a later point (Story 5), but at the center of the story is the account of how a prince from Bengal came to the *tillai* forest to look for healing, and after being healed returned to his homeland to get his court and his army and bring them to Citamparam where they built the first temple. While one might be inclined at first to treat this story as myth, the unusual style this shrine brings to this region of South India does call for some special explanation, which this story would indeed provide. If this unusual rectangular style was introduced to South India for the first time at Citamparam, then one might think of the sculptural models, referred to previously, as replicas of Citamparam itself, and even the description of the *nāgara* style in the medieval South Indian text as a local effort to provide a label for the temple style Citamparam had made famous.

The shrine itself as it now stands has two odd features, which probably indicate something important about its early religious functions. One odd feature is that the shrine is set on a four-foot-high stone base. This base is now twice the size of the shrine itself or twenty-four feet by twenty-four feet. This base provides a large front porch or stage in front of the shrine (the porch is now covered, but was not for most of the temple history), and because it is hollow it also provides a rather large dark chamber under the shrine and the porch. The other odd feature is that the only door to the shrine is not in the center of the south side as one might expect, but is well to the east, making the western half of the shrine another dark and apparently little used area. B. G. L. Swamy was curious about these two unusual features and wrote a book about the temple (1979) in an effort to explain them. He argued that Citamparam was the location of an esoteric Kashmir Śaiva cult, which involved fasting unto death, and that these somewhat hidden areas were the places where the fasting was done. While Professor Swamy's book is interesting in a number of ways, there is really no evidence of a Kashmir connection in the rest of the temple tradition and his thesis cannot be upheld on the basis of present knowledge. The only thing that can be said about these two hidden areas is that they did probably relate to the special religious practices of the somewhat esoteric community that used the shrine, but we have no way of knowing what those practices were.[11] The present-day priests say that no special religious practices are performed in those areas today, but they are still considered highly secret areas for storing precious ritual paraphernalia and only the special temple priesthood has access to them.

Although there are no inscriptions to help us set down a date when this first rectangular shrine with its thatch-styled roof was put up, there is no reason to doubt the traditional belief that it is the oldest building in the temple complex and that it once stood there alone and "in the open," as the seventh-century hymns so often emphasize. Whether it was there as early as the third, fourth, or fifth century, which is the era the legendary material would seem to refer to, cannot be proved, but neither does such an early date seem impossible. The pillared hall around it is relatively new, and other minor renovations have regularly gone on over the centuries, but the sculptured replica in the Tañcāvūr temple of the tenth century confirms our impression that the present building goes back to very early times.

The Cit Sabhā Image: Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲

The image worshiped in the Cit Sabhā at present is a three-foot-high metal image of the Dancing Śivan̲ or Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲. Although stone sculptures of this image are found on various walls of later stone temples in the area, and metal images were found in subsidiary shrines of many of the same temples, this is the only temple where the dancing image is in the central shrine. If the Cit Sabhā were to be dated as early as the third, fourth, or fifth century it would present a problem for art historians who have not usually dated Naṭarājan̲ images that early. The question that needs to be asked is whether this icon or something like it was the original object of worship in this shrine.

The question is not, of course, whether the present metal image is the original one, for it is well known that temples periodically replace metal images and have the power of the deity installed in a new image, and the priests in Citamparam will even show visitors the old images kept in their storeroom. Rather the question is whether the conception of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ was known at the time this shrine was probably constructed, and whether the elaborate form of the image worshiped at present, or even any of the earlier and simpler forms, could have been used in worship at that time. Scholarly opinion is sharply divided on this issue, and religious bias as well as scholarly prejudices come into play in any effort to answer it. Some Śaivas believe that *liṅkam* worship is the proper form of Śivaṉ worship, and that the *liṅkam* icon was the earliest icon of Śivaṉ and the icon found in all major temples. That belief in the centrality of *liṅkam* worship was argued for in the twelfth century *Śiva Purāṇa,* but by making his argument so strongly that author tacitly acknowledged that other images of Śivaṉ were being worshiped at the time. As a result of that twelfth-century debate, Citamparam too built a small *liṅkam* shrine, which we will examine later, but hymns and inscriptions leave us with no doubt that for many centuries before that debate took place Citamparam was one of the places where an image of Śivaṉ, the dancing image, was in the central shrine. The question that is difficult to answer, however, is whether the Naṭarājaṉ image was there when the shrine was first built, and what were the steps in the development of the cult associated with it.

If one were to use the conservative way of dating images employed by Douglas Barrett (1965), which is to accept only images found in temples that are datable on the basis of inscriptional evidence, there would be no possibility of dating a Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ in this area until the eighth century when stone temples and inscriptions became common. On the other hand if one were to accept the traditional dates for Tirumūlar and Māṇikkavācakar, two saints whose hymns provide elaborate descriptions of the Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ image, the cult would have to be thought of as much earlier. Tradition dates Tirumūlar in the third century and Māṇikkavācakar in the fifth, but some modern scholars have challenged the traditional dating of these saints, and they therefore do not provide us with uncontested evidence of an early Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ cult. With neither of these ways of dating the early years of the Naṭarājaṉ cult satisfactory for the present purpose, we will have to turn to the more wide-ranging arguments of religious history.

C. Sivaramamurti in his monumental study of Naṭarājaṉ (1974) discusses the matter from many angles, but without resolving it. Like other Smārta Brāhmaṇa scholars he has a tendency to assume a North Indian origin and gives considerable attention to the Bādāmi image of the sixth century and the Elephānta image from a bit later. K. Zvelebil (1985) in a sharp rebuttal to Sivaramamurti argues for a South Indian origin for the cult, and looks for support in the centrality that dance plays in South Indian ritual action from the time of the Caṅkam literature on. Zvelebil argues that it is in the South where we find dance at the heart of ritual activity from the earliest records in the early years of the common era, and where the ecstatic *kāvaṭi* dancers of Murukaṉ and the diviners of the various goddesses continue to carry on those early traditions. The earliest Tamiḻ tradition speaks of the *pāṇaṉs* who served as wandering minstrels, and the *tēvatācis* or temple dancers who brought the arts of music and dance to their highest forms. Zvelebil's argument does not include Māṇikkavācakar, but if one were to accept the traditional fifth-century date for that great saint, who spent half his life in the Pāṇṭya court where dance was central to all the court ritual and half as an ascetic in the Citamparam temple, we would see in his hymns also an early South Indian preoccupation with the aesthetic experience of the dance. In verse after verse he meditates on dance and traces out that logic until it culminates in his own ecstatic participation in the cosmic dance of Śivan̲. Māṇikkavācakar could be expressing a later theological reflection on dance, as scholars who date him later would have to maintain, but if, as the tradition maintains, he is a fifth-century figure, then his preoccupation with dance might be seen as a creative appropriation of a widespread Tamil̲ interest in dance in order to develop a new, and perhaps at the time somewhat esoteric, ritual pattern for worshiping Śivan̲.

Whatever the exact date and/or form of the first Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲ image, or the exact date of the ritual associated with that image, all the traditions of the temple complex in Citamparam have taken that worship tradition for granted and have cited it as the raison d'être of the place. Just how special or esoteric the original worship of Śivan̲ as a Dancing God really was is now hard to say because the image of Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲ became a popular one to include in the sculpture of later temples, and is now one of the best-known Indian sculptures throughout the world. It remains true, however, that the use of Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲ as the central object of worship is unique to Citamparam, and this arrangement was thought of as somewhat esoteric and mysterious even as early as the ninth century when the temple became very directly involved in the political process. In some sense the legends about the special sacredness of the Cir̲r̲ampalam or "Little Hall" might be consistent with the view that the Hall existed briefly as an esoteric meditation center of some kind before it became associated with the cult of Dancing Śivan̲, but throughout the historical period at any rate the sacredness of the place and the identity of the deity as Naṭarājan̲ have been inextricably linked, and one would have to conclude that the Dancing Image was almost certainly the earliest known focus of worship in this sacred spot.

The Nṛtta Sabhā

About a hundred feet to the south of the Cit Sabhā is another ancient structure, which is positioned in a most unusual way in relation to the central shrine. In early inscriptions this second structure is called by the Tamil̲ name "Etirampalam"[12] or "Opposite Hall," which would seem to indicate its special relation to the central shrine. Like the central shrine, the Etirampalam (later called by the Sanskrit name "Nṛtta Sabhā" or "Dance Hall") is also a four-foot-high platform about twenty-four feet square. To the sides of the platform are huge wheels, which give it the appearance of a chariot; on top of the platform is a set of delicately carved pillars holding up a thatch-style roof; and attached to it on the west is a smaller structure, which faces east and also has a separate, thatch-style roof. Some art historians have thought that the chariot wheels, delicately carved pillars, and platform sculptures point to a later date, because these features were occasionally used in twelfth- or thirteenth-century temples,[13] but that argument is not complete in itself, however, for those features could just as well have been copied from this famous temple by the architects of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The two inscriptions that refer to the "Etirampalam" are of the eleventh century, so it is at least that old, but it is probably much older for those inscriptions refer to a well-known structure and the roof style of the building is similar to that of the Cit Sabhā. One art historian even went so far as to argue that "it is the oldest structure in the whole temple complex."[14]

The legends associated with the Etirampalam link it most directly with the earliest level of the temple tradition.[15] These legends have to do with a goddess called Piṭāriyar in early inscriptions, but usually called by the better known Sanskrit name Kāḷi in most accounts. The base legend was that the goddess patrolled the forbidding *tillai* forest with her tiger. A second, but perhaps later, legend had her presiding over a cremation ground roughly in the area of the present Etirampalam. And the third, and best-known, legend involved the goddess getting trapped in a dance contest with the god Śivan̲ and losing out on a technicality when he raised his leg straight over his head, a position that she, as a woman, was unable to duplicate because of its immodesty. Although she was technically defeated, the legend accords her a kind of moral victory and indicates that the two deities were thereafter united in a kind of common reign and common life of dance. At present only a small image of the goddess defeated in the dance contest is housed in the Etirampalam, but the tradition is that it once housed a major goddess image and that the god in the central shrine took great delight in watching out of his south-facing door as the goddess danced on her platform, which is directly in front of his shrine.

What we would like to know about the Etirampalam or Nṛtta Sabhā is whether the place on which it was built was once the home of an independent goddess cult, perhaps even one predating the arrival of the Śivan̲ cult. There does not seem to be any way we could recover that early history, but what we do know is that the earliest level of tradition represented by the buildings we do have involved the worship of both Kāḷi and Śivan̲ in a complex ritual interdependence, which was to be modified in later stages of the tradition. We will have occasion to refer to some of these later forms of Kāḷi worship in discussing other buildings within the temple complex.

Viṣṇu Temple?

Before leaving the "Early Period" in the history of the development of this temple complex, we must deal with the question of whether there was also a Viṣṇu temple in Citamparam at this early date. Toward the end of this period, during the seventh and eighth centuries, the south of India witnessed a dramatic cultural development as itinerant hymn singers went from temple to temple throughout the region singing the praises of the two major male deities, Śivan̲ and Viṣṇu. Although their primary criticisms were leveled at the Jaina monks, who were prominent in the area at the time and enjoyed much favor from the Pallava and Pāṇṭya kings, these hymn singers were rivals of one another as well. By the end of this period Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples were sharply distinguished and had their own rituals, priests, and hymnbooks, even though worshipers would apparently sometimes attend both kinds of temples. The three itinerant Śaiva hymn singers—Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar—each visited Citamparam briefly and sang there, and in a subsequent chapter (Story 6) we will have occasion to discuss the content of their hymns on Citamparam. The problem that interests us at the moment, however, is that two of the twelve Vaiṣṇava hymn singers, namely Tirumaṅkai and Kulacēkara,[16] also sang in Citamparam at a shrine they called *Tirucitrakūṭancenru* or the "Tiny Little Holy Place," a name that is rather similar to Ciṟṟampalam or "Little Hall." They do not say anything about the image they worshiped, but they do mention that the Pallava king had visited the place and that it was served by a special priesthood called the Mūvāyiravar or the "Three Thousand," the same name the Śaiva hymn singers used for the priests serving their deity. (From the twelfth century on, Vaiṣṇava theologians pointed to these hymns and argued that the image of their deity had been destroyed, and they called on various kings to restore it in spite of the great Śaiva tradition that had developed there in the meantime.[17] Finally in 1539 the Vicayanakaram king, Acyutatēvarāya, did have a Vaiṣṇava temple set in the middle of the Citamparam temple complex where worship is carried on to this day.)[18]

What kind of Vaiṣṇava worship might have been going on in Citamparam in the seventh and eighth centuries to inspire the hymns of Tirumaṅkai and Kulacēkara? There seem to be two major possibilities: one would be that up to that time temples did not have strict sectarian affiliation and both the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava hymn singers felt at home in the "Little Hall" (this theory could be true whether or not the Naṭarājaṉ cultus had begun, if, as seems possible, sectarian loyalties had not yet been set in place as they were by the ninth century). The other possibility would be that in addition to the Śaiva and goddess shrines we have already discussed, there was a third shrine of Viṣṇu at this time somewhere nearby, and the same priesthood served all three. It is quite common in South India for three temples to be built on one sacred spot, and one assumes that at one time it was more common for one set of priests to serve all three temples. (It is still common to have one priesthood for neighboring Śaiva and goddess temples, but Vaiṣṇavas developed a more militantly sectarian posture during medieval times and now always have their own priesthood.) The idea that the Vaiṣṇavas did have their own shrine in the seventh and eighth centuries is indirectly supported to some extent by the boasting of the court poet in the twelfth century that the king he served had "thrown an image of Viṣṇu into the sea" at Citamparam.[19] Whether one takes these viciously sectarian statements of the twelfth century literally or figuratively, they still serve to illumine by contrast the situation of the seventh and eighth centuries when, apparently, Śaiva, goddess, and Vaiṣṇava forms of worship existed side by side with a common priesthood.

If we judge by the buildings that were standing at that time, it would appear that the cultic activity at the earliest phase of the temple's history centered on the rituals of dance associating Śivaṉ and Kāḷi. The dark mysteries associated with the goddess's power were engaged and met by Śivaṉ in the dance contest that shook the universe, but the relationship continued in more subdued and tender forms as each "watched" the other.

In his famous erotic poem called the *Tirukkōvaiyār* Māṇikkavācakar plays with this relation in a way that was somewhat difficult for later generations to understand because they no longer had the cultic practice with which it was associated. However one interprets the poem, it is clear that the general theme is the dark mystery of the erotic, and that it is through that theme that Māṇikkavācakar expresses one of the most elusive but profound human understandings of the divine life. It would appear that it was this understanding of the divine that the earliest traditions of the temple sought to express in their worship.

Whether this worship tradition was developed locally or influenced by ascetics and priests who arrived from Bengal or somewhere else has been a matter of sharp debate. The legends of the thirteenth century hold that both the temple and the priesthood were introduced to Citamparam by a king from Bengal, and the unique traditions of the temple would probably indicate that it did not develop in quite the same way as the other temples in this part of South India. Whatever the original inspiration, the traditions have been thought of as unique now for well over a thousand years, and it is not likely that we could or should go further in identifying those sources of inspiration.

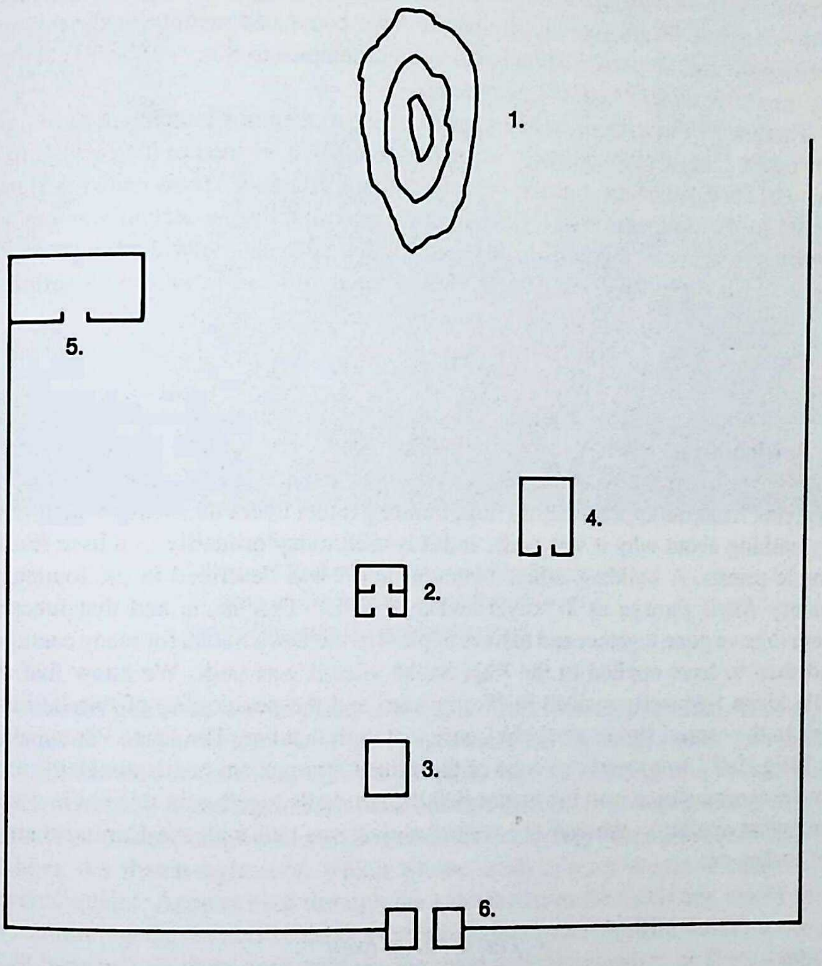
Period Two: The Golden Roof (850–950)

In the mid-ninth century a major political reorganization took place in the Kāvēri River valley. We will discuss more about the overall sociopolitical dynamics of this situation in a later chapter on the social groups that supported the temple complex, but we need to note in connection with the evolution of the building itself that from the ninth century on the Cōḻa kings come to play a major role. Prior to the mid-ninth century the Kāvēri River valley, which runs west to east through the center of Tamiḻnāṭu, was a region controlled by the decentralized power of local landlords. The empires of the Pallavas in Kāñcīpuram to the north and the Pāṇṭyas in Maturai to the south overran the area at will in their battles against one another. During these centuries the Cōḻa family must have been relegated to chieftain status. It is hardly heard from between the third and the ninth centuries, but the emperors from the ninth century on sought to trace a continuous lineage from the earlier branches of the family, which had been mentioned in the Aśokan inscriptions of the third century B.C.E. and in the Caṅkam poems of the early centuries of the common era.

In the mid-ninth century Vicayālaya and his son Ātitya I brought the Cōḻa family renewed prominence very quickly when they suddenly switched their support from the Pallavas to the Pāṇṭyas, and then just as quickly declared themselves independent and asked both neighboring rulers to stay out of their realm. Vicayālaya set up his new capital at the previously unimportant center of Tañcāvūr, rather than the traditional family base of Uṟaiyūr further west, apparently because Tañcāvūr had strategic importance. It was Ātitya I, however, who consolidated the empire for the first time. He marched up the Kāvēri basin and the Koṅku plateau to the west and won control of the entire area by arms and alliance. Then he returned to Citamparam in the northeast corner of the kingdom with a huge horde of gold. Ātitya's son, Parāntaka I, carried on the expansion drive for some time, subduing both the Pallavas and the Pāṇṭyas and even taking on the preeminent power in India at the time, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. He went too far, however, and in 949 at the famous battle of Takkōlam the Cōḻas were defeated, and the empire went into a temporary state of confusion.

The Cōḻa family interest in Citamparam is a bit difficult to explain. In a later discussion we will take up the complex question of the role of temples in the

DIAGRAM TWO



Period Two: The Golden Roof
4. Deva Sabhā
5. Hundred Pillared Hall
6. Earlier South Kōpuram and Third Wall

family's overall political strategy. The initial move, however, of the Early Cōḻas seems to be at least partly related to a special family connection with what was at that point a rather remote focus of sacred power. As the Cōḻa family legends tell it they had a great ancestor, presumably a chieftain in the days of relative obscurity, named Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ or "King Red Eye."[20] His unusual name comes from the special circumstances of his birth, which took place in Citamparam. His parents had not had a son, and therefore they went to Citamparam to pray for one. His mother conceived, but the child was about to be born at an inauspicious time. She asked that her legs be tightly bound together and that she be kept upside down to prevent this unfortunate birth. When the inauspicious time had passed and the child was eventually born, it had distorted eye and skin coloring. Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ is reputed to have become a very devout king and to have convinced seventy of the regional chieftains along the Kāvēri River basin to build temples to Śivaṉ. The Cōḻa lineage was thereafter closely tied to Citamparam.

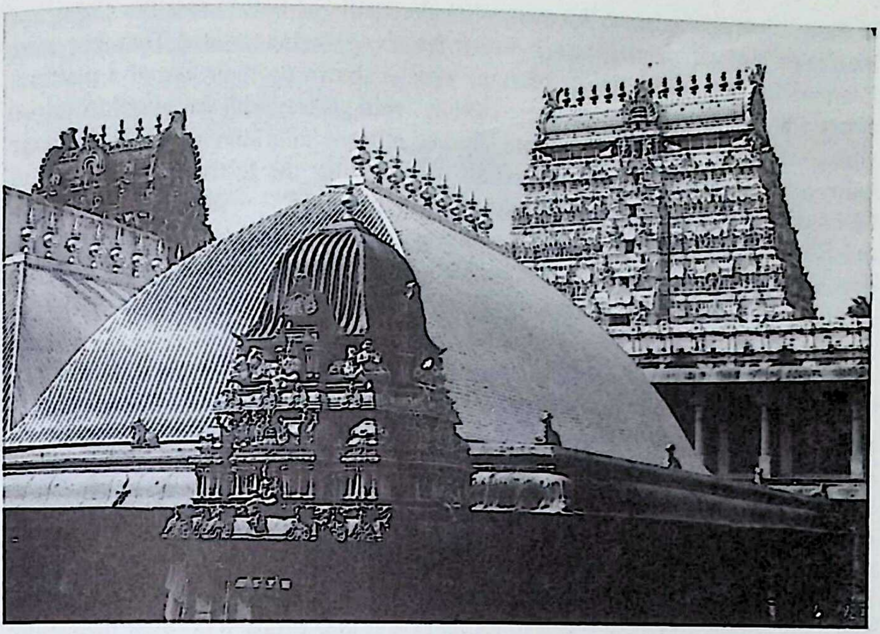
There were three major building projects undertaken in Citamparam during the time of the Early Cōḻas and each can be tied to the new interest of the royal family. One was the establishment of the Pērampalam or "Big Hall" (now called the Deva Sabhā) to the northeast of the Cit Sabhā or central shrine; a second was the all-important placing of a gold shingled roof on the Cit Sabhā; and the third was the construction of the Hundred Pillared Hall to the northwest of the central shrine.

The Deva Sabhā

The Deva Sabhā, which early inscriptions call the Pērampalam, must have seemed like an enormous building in its day. It is about fifty feet square, or four times the size of the central shrine, and is two stories high, so that while it still bears a thatch-style roof it has the appearance of a huge building rather than a thatch hut. Inscriptions say nothing about why it was built, and it is used today primarily as a base for the temple priests. A building called "Pērampalam" was described in the fourteenth century *Kōyil Purāṇa* as a "royal audience hall." That name and that function seem to have gone together and to have applied to the Deva Sabhā for many centuries and then to have applied to the Rāja Sabhā after it was built. We know that the Cōḻa kings frequently resided in Citamparam and the positioning of this building near to the central shrine would be consistent with that use. The name Pērampalam or "Big Hall" was clearly an echo of the name Ciṟṟampalam or "Little Hall" used for the central shrine, and the names tied the two halls together in this era in a way somewhat similar to the way the central shrine was tied with the Etirampalam in the earlier era.

The Golden Roof

The single most dramatic event in the construction of the whole temple complex in Citamparam was the placing of a roof of solid gold shingles on the "Ciṟṟampalam" or "Little Hall," which was later to be called the Cit Sabhā. Some early records describe this action as a thank offering carried out by Ātitya I who had collected the gold on his conquest up the Kāvēri River valley to the west.[21] Other early records seem to credit both Ātitya and his son Parāntaka I with this act, and one might presume it was begun in one reign and completed in the next.[22] (Some later kings and queens are also credited with this act where lists of their beneficence are cited,[23] but it seems most likely that those references refer to repairs or polishing and that the roof as it exists today is substantially the one for which the temple has been famous from the time of Ātitya to the present.)



Golden Roof of Cit Sabhā
Shrine of Brahmā/Caṇṭēcuvaraṉ in foreground
Vimāna of Gōvintarājaṉ in left background
West Kōpuram in right background

Once the gold roof was in place, it is not difficult to imagine the drastic change that must have come in the life of the temple complex. Up to this point the temple had been the site of an obscure, if not esoteric, form of worship in a remote out-of-the-way place. Suddenly it must have become the center of a great flurry of pilgrims. The three buildings then standing make an exceedingly beautiful combination. All have the thatch-style roof, which by the ninth century would already have appeared quaint. Approaching through the gateway from the south one would first have come upon the chariotlike dance platform (Etirampalam or Nṛtta Sabhā) housing a Kāḷi image; from there one could see the royal hall (Pērampalam or Deva Sabhā) off to the northeast; and just in front was the incredibly holy place with the golden roof (Ciṟṟampalam or Cit Sabhā), which housed the image of the Dancing God.

Hundred Pillared Hall

The third and last building program in Citamparam associated with the Early Cōḻas is the Hundred Pillared Hall. Now in a state of bad repair, this hall clearly has some of the earliest pillar styles in the temple complex and would appear to have been built at roughly this time. (A later inscription describing a building program in Kulōttuṅka I's time mentions a "hundred pillared hall" as well, but it presumably was taking credit for repair work in the hall as many inscriptions do.)[24] This is one of the earliest examples of the many "hundred pillared halls" that the Cōḻas had built in major temple complexes, but their function remains unclear. That they were intended for public ceremonies of some kind is shown by their use of a platform at one end facing an open hall where crowds could gather, with the overflow crowd sitting among the many pillars. Some hundred pillared halls later served as marriage halls, and the festival manual the priests use says that the festival "marriage" of Śivaṉ and Śivakāmacuntari should take place in that hall.[25] One inscription describes the Hundred Pillared Hall of Citamparam as a place "where Śivaṉ could enjoy dancing with his beloved Kāḷi,"[26] presumably also an indication that it was the location of some kind of festival activity. The structure is no longer safe, however, and no festival activity occurs there now to help us understand what these ceremonies might have been like. One might also envisage hundred pillared halls as suitable locations for hymn recitations following the Śaiva custom that Tamiḻ hymns are sung primarily by laymen (*Ōtuvārs*) outside the main shrine, but there is no contemporary inscriptional evidence to indicate that this hall was used for that purpose.

In general we can argue that the construction of the Hundred Pillared Hall in Citamparam represents the way in which the Citamparam tradition sought for the first time to face up to the problem of the esoteric and the exoteric, or the secret and cultic versus the public in Hindu worship. Most ancient societies considered some knowledge to be the result of secret revelation, which was to be handed on to others only under very special circumstances. In the classical period of Indian thought the Vedic school was known to be very exclusive. The Jainas and Buddhists raised objections to what they considered the Vedic school's overemphasis on the esoteric, but they themselves eventually developed rather restricted communities and treated their own texts in very special ways. Śaiva worship was from the beginning outside the restricted communities of the Vedic teachers and the Jaina and Buddhist monastic orders, but it had its own sense of secret rites. The special communities that followed those rites, such as the Kāpālikas, Kālāmukhas, and Pāśupatas, came to be known for their mysterious practices and were thought of by others as esoteric communities.[27]

A problem for the esoteric community arises as soon as it receives the support of political leaders whose natural interest is in the more public forms of culture that can be enjoyed by all those within the political domain. Inscriptions show that Śaiva cult had received the support of some local chieftains in different parts of India prior to this time, but it had been Jaina, Buddhist, and Vaiṣṇava teachings that had more often been associated with the rulers with wider imperial ambitions.[28] The Cōḻa family had first come in contact with Citamparam when it was most likely a center of rather esoteric ritual, and its initial loyalty to that ritual was related to the miraculous birth of its ancestor Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ. As the family's imperial ambitions grew, it sought to use that special ritual center to give a wider cultural unity to its domain, and this brought the royal family into conflict with the interests of the priests, which were rooted in their responsibility for a special ritual tradition.[29] The compromise that was worked out here in the establishment of the Hundred Pillared Hall was the one more or less used throughout South India in the ensuing period. By providing this hall, images of the deity could be brought there for more public and popular forms of worship, while the inner sanctum could remain the domain of esoteric forms of ritual, with only people who were especially initiated given access.

The Wall

One final question about the state of the temple complex at the time of the Early Cōḻas must be taken up. That question concerns the outer boundary, and the question of whether there were any walls and gateways in place at this time. We know two things about this matter. One is that the original entrance was always to the south. The entrance flowed due south from the central shrine so that the Etirampalam sat in the middle of the pathway as if it were a chariot arrived to pay respect to the central deity. In the early history of the temple complex, the major festival was the festival of the month of Māci (see Story 2) in which the image of the deity is taken all the way to the seacoast. Inscriptions describing this festival explicitly state that the deity is taken out the south gate of the temple complex.[30] The other thing we know about the outer walls is that in a later eleventh or twelfth century renovation the east and west gateways, and most of the main, or "third," wall with its fancy porches, were set up.[31] During this renovation we presume that an earlier wall was torn down because stones used in a small temple in the western end of the town contain inscriptions that appear to indicate that they were once part of an outer wall in the Citamparam temple complex.[32] What we may presume then is that during the Early Cōḻa period an early version of the south gateway or *kōpuram* was in place (we will see later the evidence that it was remodeled in the thirteenth century), and that at least a low wall, which was demolished in the eleventh or twelfth century, surrounded the area to the south of the bathing tank, which is all that had been developed up to that time.

The ritual practices of Citamparam must have been drastically altered by the role the Early Cōḻa kings had come to play in the life of the temple. In a later discussion we will examine their special religious interests, which centered on the introduction of hymn singing throughout their realm (see Story 4), but even if we do nothing but imagine the impact of their building program we can see that a major change in the Citamparam tradition was involved. There is no direct evidence that Kāḷi worship was discouraged at this time, but we hear less about it and much more about the public activities such as the hymn singing and festival life which would have taken place in the more public structures, such as the royal audience hall or Pērampalam and the Hundred Pillared Hall. The central shrine or Ciṟṟampalam was in no way diminished in its importance, however, for it received the unique gold shingled roof which has been revered and talked about ever since. What the placing of the gold roof on the Ciṟṟampalam did, however, was to make it not so much a place for worship but an object of worship, and the many references to this roof in inscriptions and hymns all speak as if the sight of the roof is in itself one of the goals of the pilgrim. Inside the shrine the priests no doubt continued with their highly unusual rituals, but the Cōḻa kings had effectively made the temple the most holy site in their realm and a major unifying force in their newly conceived imperial plan.

Period Three: The Full Complex (1070–1225)

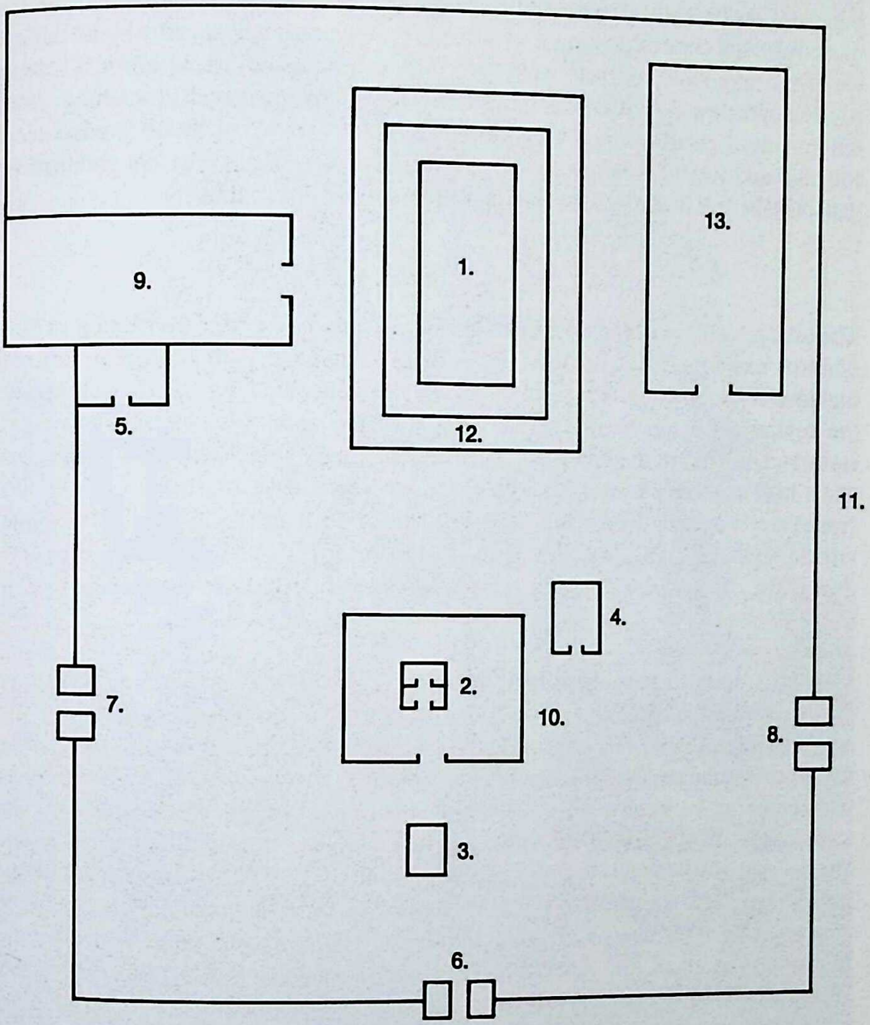
One of the most important stories about Citamparam is that there appears to have been no building activity there during the reigns of the two most powerful Cōl̲a rulers, Rājarāja I (r. 985–1017) and Rājēndra I (r. 1012–44). Some of the secondary sources on South Indian history say that Rājarāja "was a great devotee of Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲ of Citamparam,"[33] but there is no evidence of his even having visited the temple, let alone carrying out a building program there. He still may have been a great devotee, of course, but his policy on temple worship was a sharply new one that centered on making his royal temple at Tañcāvūr the focus of worship in the realm. Within the Tañcāvūr temple a *liṅkam* icon is in the central shrine, but there is an important supplementary shrine for the dancing form of the deity (the Tamil̲ name Āṭavallān̲ is used in the inscriptions), and on the wall of that shrine a full replica of the Citamparam shrine is reproduced in a relief sculpture.[34] It would appear that Rājarāja's policy was to bring the power of the Dancing Image to Tañcāvūr, rather than to further the development of Citamparam itself.

Rājarāja's son, Rājēndra I, moved the capital to a new location, which was about forty miles from Citamparam. Some historians have wondered if he did that to be near the worship place of his Cōl̲a ancestors in Citamparam,[35] but the location of his capital might better be explained in terms of its strategic location on the natural route to the north where so much of his conquest took place, including the crossing of the far off Ganges River, which inspired him to name his capital Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōl̲apuram or "the city of the Cōl̲a who conquered the Ganges." Rājēndra I, like his father, built a large temple of his own in the new capital, and as far as we know initiated no building programs in Citamparam.

After the era of the great imperial Cōl̲as, Rājarāja and Rājēndra, the empire was unable to establish a clear line of succession and entered into a period of chaos. The chaos ended only when the Cāḷukyan ruler of Central India, whose mother was a Cōl̲a princess, decided to seize the Cōl̲a throne and take the name Kulōttuṅka I in 1070. Kulōttuṅka was a powerful conqueror, but he was known most of all for his firm administrative arrangements. One of the most evident expressions of his administrative concern is found in the hundreds of inscriptions on the walls of major temples, which are really land reforms ordering temples to take over unused lands, or give over to certain landlords their own unused lands. The stable system of administration Kulōttuṅka established continued in much that form for a 150 years with subsequent rulers taking less and less interest in conquest and more and more in devotional activity, much of it at Citamparam.

There is not much direct evidence that Kulōttuṅka personally took an interest in reestablishing the public links between the Cōl̲a family and Citamparam which had been evident under Ātitya and Parāntaka. He did make one important and rather symbolic donation to Citamparam. When the king of far-off Cambodia, with whom

DIAGRAM THREE



Period Three: The Full Complex

7. West Kōpuram
8. Earlier East Kōpuram
9. Goddess temple (Śivakāmacuntari)
10. First wall and porches
11. "Third wall" and porches
12. Temple tank steps and porches
13. Rāja Sabhā

he had an alliance, presented him with a sacred stone, he donated it to Citamparam and had it placed in the Etirampalam where it could be easily seen by the deity in the Cir̲r̲ampalam.[36] The more important developments in Citamparam were, however, made in the name of Nāralōkavīran̲, a fascinating figure who describes himself as a general in the army of Kulōttuṅka. Just why this nonroyal figure undertook the most important construction in the history of the temple complex, and why he did not credit his ruler more for what must have been a major fund-raising effort involving royal support we do not know. Presumably Kulōttuṅka had seen something about the system of personal royal sponsorship of religion followed by his predecessors Rājarāja and Rājēndra which he did not like, and he chose to let his enthusiastic general take full credit for the building program in Citamparam.

Nāralōkavīran̲'s Building Program

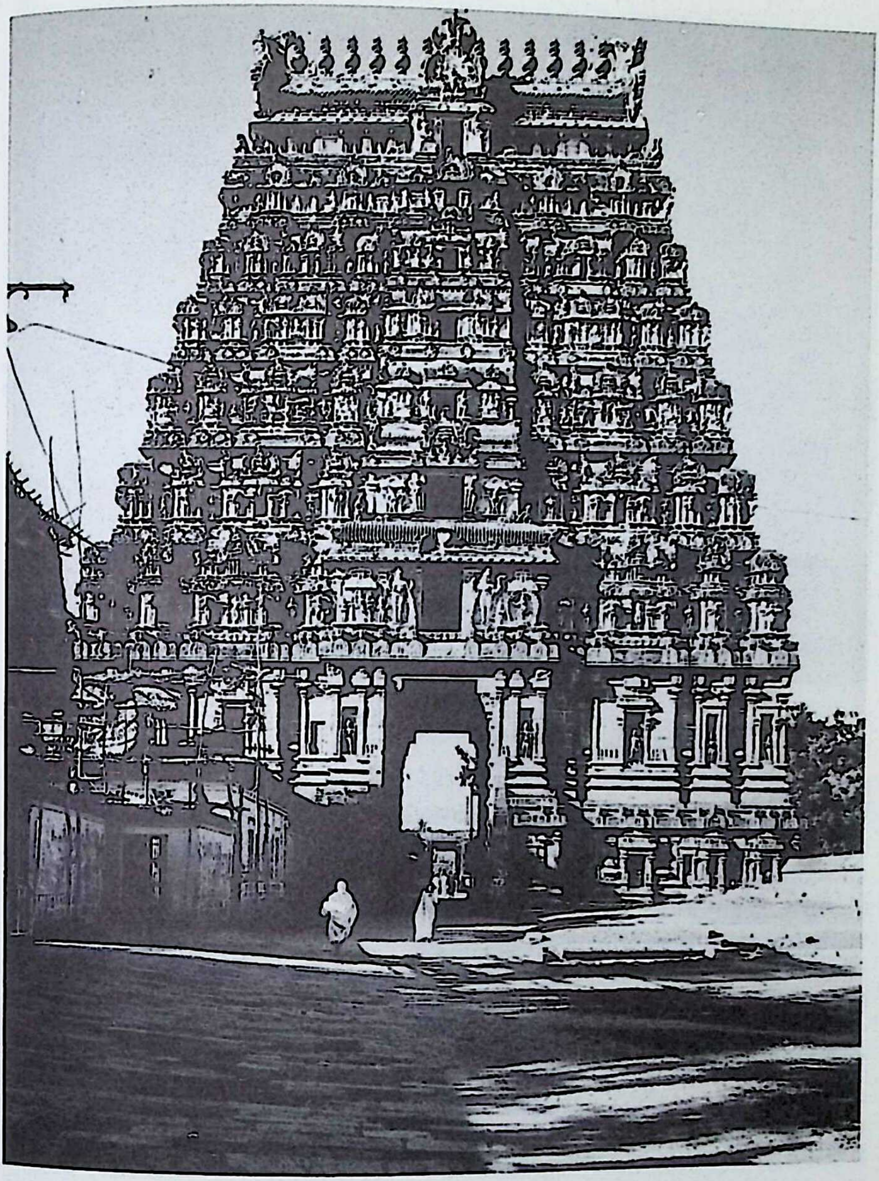
The total rebuilding program of Nāralōkavīran̲ is described in an inscription in both Sanskrit and Tamil̲ (an unusual and perhaps somewhat pretentious format) and included the following: two gateway towers, the inner wall or "first" wall around the central shrine, expansion of the temple of the goddess Śivakāmacuntari, the stairs and porches of the water tank, the main or "third" outer wall with its porches, and a host of other doorways and golden vessels for use in the ritual.[37] All of these features of the temple complex as it still stands do bear the imprint of the same artistic style, and they give it a greater sense of artistic unity and exquisite taste than is usually found when large temple complexes develop over many centuries.

The Gateways

Much has been written about the artistry of the *kōpurams* or gateway towers of Citamparam.[38] The decision to put towers on the east and west (in addition to the southern one, which in its original form was earlier) seems to represent the earliest use of this arrangement in a South Indian temple, an arrangement for which they later came to be known.[39] At this point in history there might well have been sociological as well as artistic considerations involved in this decision. It is well known that the Mūvāyiravar or religious community of the "Three Thousand" lived in special houses to the east of the temple. To the west a rather large residential area must have developed for we know that a "popular" temple was being built in this area at about this time, because it now contains stones that appear to have been discarded from the Nāralōkavīran̲ renovation of the main temple.[40] By having gateways to the east for the exclusive use of the special religious community, and to the west for the occasions when the public was invited to the temple complex, it was possible to give architectural form to the social structure of the region, a social structure that the temple complex both reflected and reinforced.

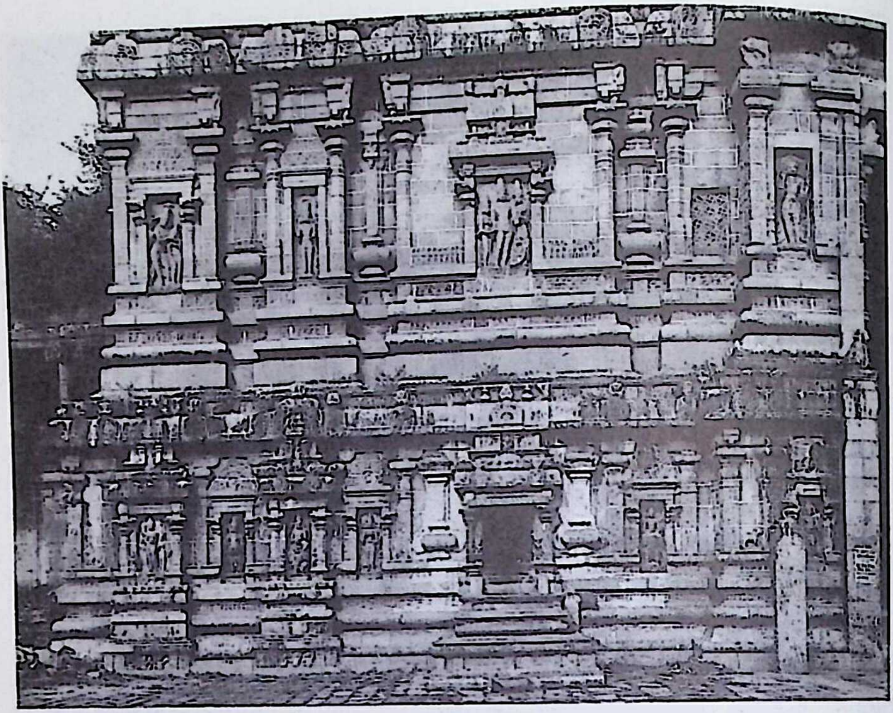
The Goddess Temple

The expansion of the temple of the goddess Śivakāmacuntari seems to represent the most direct contribution Nāralōkavīran̲ intended to make to the religious life of the temple complex. The temple of the goddess as redesigned by Nārlōkavīran̲ was built in the usual "Later Cōl̲a" style of the day with a stone *vimāna* and two grand



East Kōpuram or Gateway

pirakārams or walkways surrounded by high stone walls. It faces east in the orthodox direction for goddess temples and is grand in every way, many times larger than the other buildings of the temple complex. It was probably intended that it would replace the other two structures, the Hundred Pillared Hall and the tiny Durgā shrine, with which it shares the western side of the temple tank, but the extreme conservatism



Gateway sculptures

of the temple complex's tradition must have finally prevailed, and those two earlie structures continue to crowd awkwardly against the outer wall of the goddess temple.

Prior to the placement of goddess temples within larger temple complexes, it would seem that most rural areas had small goddess temples served by local priests, while the towns of rich landlords had begun building stone temples of Śivaṉ, or occasionally Viṣṇu, which were served by priests imported from North India.[41] By bringing these two worship traditions of goddess worship and Śivaṉ worship together in such a clear way, Nāralōkavīraṉ had also brought into one social and cultural community the laborers and landholders who had probably migrated into the region from different areas and were inclined initially to continue with their separate cultures. Having seen the possibilities of the policy adopted here, the Cōḻas pushed it actively elsewhere, and during the next century many of the major temple complexes of the region were rebuilt with goddess temples and Śivaṉ temples set side by side. In Citamparam where the policy may have been initiated, it worked less well than elsewhere, because the conservatism of the tradition did not allow for any rebuilding of the shrine of Śivaṉ, with the result that the goddess temple, even though the grander of the two, never was able to share the sanctity and importance of the central shrine.

The Inner and Outer Walls

In some way the whole idea of a temple complex as a focus of multiple forms of worship and multiple forms of social and cultural behavior must be attributed to

Nāralōkavīraṉ. While the earlier shrine of the Dancing God had been the focus of a specific, and maybe somewhat esoteric, form of worship, and while other forms of worship and other social and cultural activities were loosely drawn to the banks of the bathing tank, Nāralōkavīraṉ put up two walls that effectively defined the religious tradition as he understood it. The exquisite inner wall was set around the sacred central shrine and the well that supplied its important ritual water. It originally had just one entrance on the south side and contains two stories of beautiful porches from where worshipers could view the gold roof and the rituals on the porch of the shrine. It protected and defined the most sacred area in a clear way. The outer wall (now often called the "third" wall because an intermediate wall was built at a later date) was placed around the whole set of buildings then within the temple complex. That would include earlier structures such as the bathing tank, the Etirampalam, the Pērampalam or royal hall, and the Hundred Pillared Hall, as well as the goddess temple. What Nāralōkavīraṉ's outer wall indicated was that all of the social, political, and religious activities that went on in and around these buildings were part of one cultural whole. Now each of the activities was forced slowly to learn to reexpress itself in a language all could understand. While the inscriptions give Nāralōkavīraṉ rather than Kulōttuṅka credit for the new ideas expressed in this arrangement of the temple complex, Kulōttuṅka as an emperor who had taken over a kingdom in disarray could not have helped being pleased that a new kind of cultural integration was being put in place that would indirectly serve to legitimize his rule.

The Rāja Sabhā

Kulōttuṅka's son, Vikrama (r. 1118–33), was much more keen than his father about taking credit for the rebuilding of Citamparam. He lists most of the work of Nāralōkavīraṉ as his own and traveled to Citamparam for the rededication when the work was finally completed in 1118,[42] just as he was starting to share the responsibility of ruling with his father. He later issued instructions for inscriptions on temples throughout the realm "from his residence in Citamparam," indicating that he might well have spent a good deal of his reign in a Citamparam palace.[43]

Vikrama's son, Kulōttuṅka II (r. 1133–50), is described by court poets and inscriptions elsewhere as a great devotee of Citamparam who also spent much time there,[44] but for some odd reason there are no inscriptions carved on the walls of Citamparam during his seventeen year reign. When this surprising fact is examined, along with the equally surprising fact that the grand Cōḻa audience hall which was built to the east of the temple tank at about this time also contains no inscriptional evidence as to who built it, one wonders if Kulōttuṅka II had adopted a policy of not allowing inscriptions to be carved in Citamparam for some special religious reason. In any case the tradition is clear that he spent much time in Citamparam, and it seems quite likely that the grand building sometimes called the Thousand Pillared Hall but now usually called the Rāja Sabhā was built by him as a royal audience hall.

Certainly a royal hall on the grounds of a temple complex would have had a major effect on the whole atmosphere. It would among other things have been the focus of musical performances and learned recitations. One of the most famous pieces of Tamiḻ literature is the *Periya Purāṇa,* which is supposed to have been composed in Citamparam by Cēkkiḻār on the explicit orders of Kulōttuṅka II and recited during a year long grand ceremony in the royal audience hall.[45]

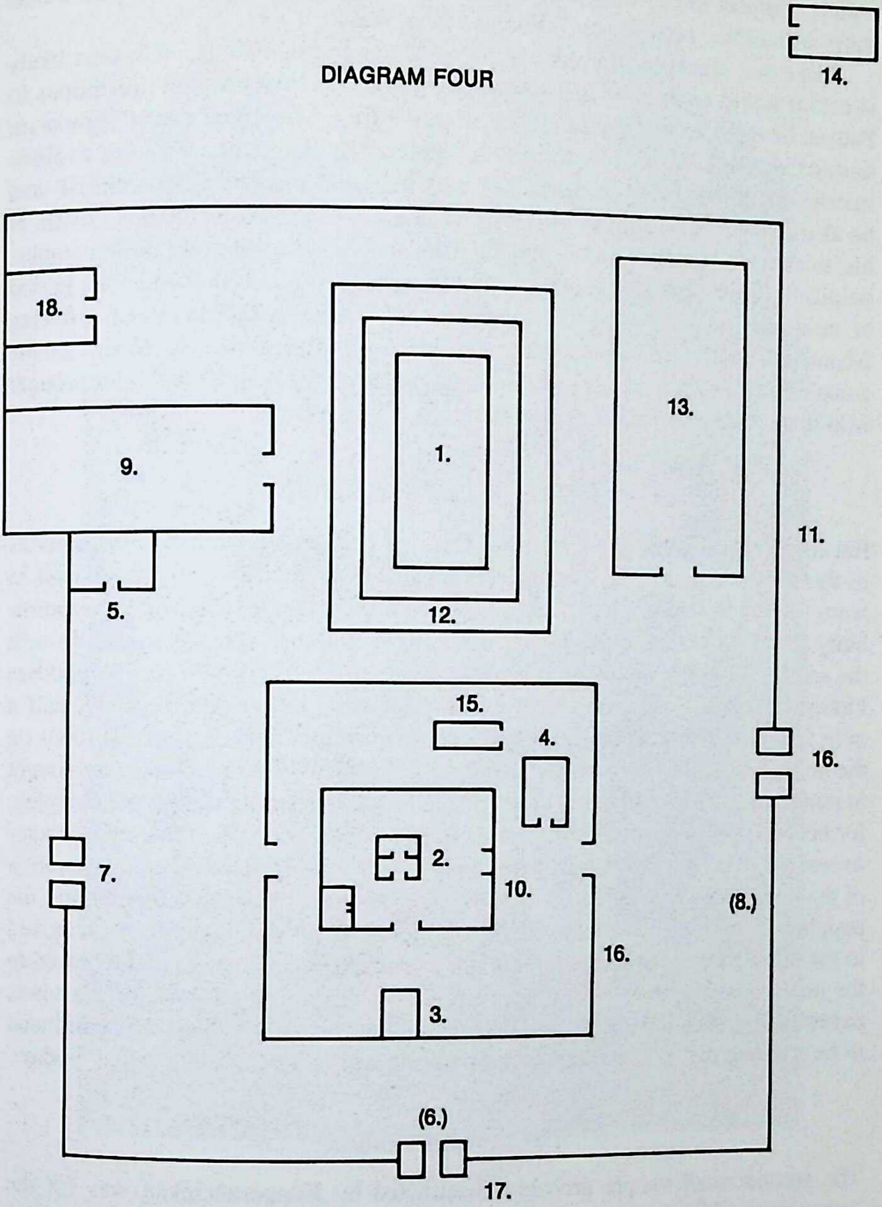
While the king wanted to be close to his chosen deity, there is no evidence that he had any interest in using religion for political ends as had his forefathers Rājarāja and Rājēndra. If anything it would appear that he might have somewhat neglected his political duties because of his preoccupation with religion. His excess of devotion would also fit with the other story associated with him—that he removed the Viṣṇu image from the town and "threw it into the sea" (see discussion earlier in this chapter). Perhaps this story of later generations arose because he was a partisan Śaiva or perhaps because in the process of building his royal hall he had a small Viṣṇu shrine in that vicinity removed. In any case the story fits with his overall image of a king who all but abandoned his duties in a passionate longing to be near the image of the Dancing God.

Although there was little new building activity in Citamparam between the middle of the twelfth century and the middle of the thirteenth, the pattern previously established did seem to continue and each ruler is said to have spent time there and also used the temple complex as a focus of cultural activity.[46] The impact of all this royal interest in temple life in general does not seem to have interfered with the ritual activity of the priests. The traditions of the religious specialists of Citamparam were by this time well known and widely respected, and the Cōḻa kings were not really keen to change them as they used the temple complex for wider cultural purposes. A bit of tension between the priests and the royal tradition seems to be hidden behind the stories of the *Citamparamāhātmya* or official legend book of the temple written about this time. It seems safe to assume that the book was written by a priestly sympathizer and that it provides a priestly point of view on a well-established set of rights and privileges governing the extensive interactions of the priests and the emperors. If that account is an accurate reflection of the actual interaction, the emperors never really challenged the priestly prerogatives (see Story 5). The royally sponsored culture center of the empire was certainly located within the temple complex of Citamparam, but as best we can tell the priestly community continued with its special and nearly esoteric tradition of ritual devotion.

Period Four: Orthodox Śaiva Revisions (1225–1310)

By the middle of the thirteenth century the Cōḻa Empire had been weakened by many generations of stability and what some historians have thought was an excessive concern with devotion and culture on the part of the kings. Rājarāja III (r. 1216–46) appropriately symbolizes the decline as almost every temple wall in the region came to be covered with his inscriptions, while at the same time a number of rival powers encroached on his sovereignty.[47] Two of the rivals, the Cēras, who encroached on the western borders, and the Hoysaḷas, who came in from the northwest and through a treaty with Rājarāja III were able to set up a southern capital down near Tiruccirāppaḷḷi, never became involved in the temple complex at Citamparam. The other two rivals, the old foes in the Pāṇṭya country and a local chieftain pretending to be an offshoot of the long defunct Pallava line, tried to use the walls of the Citamparam

DIAGRAM FOUR


14.
18.
13.
1.
9.
11.
5.
12.
15.
4.
16.
2.
7.
10.
(8.)
16.
3.
(6.)
17.

Period Four: Orthodox Śaiva Revisions

14. Kāḷi temple
15. Liṅkam temple
16. East Kōpuram relocation
17. South Kōpuram renovation
18. Pāṇṭya Temple

temple complex to prove their political and cultural hegemony. As a result a new flurry of building activity took place in Citamparam.

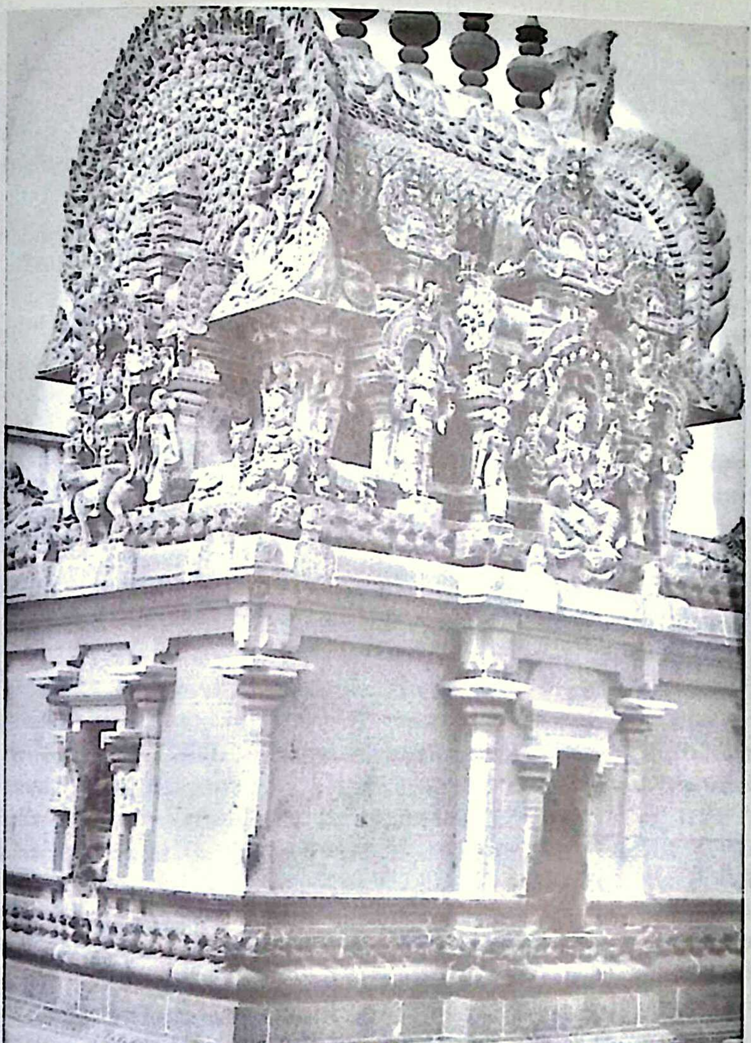
The exact sequence of events is impossible to reestablish, but the most likely situation would seem to be that Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ, the chieftain with pretentions to Pallava lineage, virtually ruled the local region from his capital near Citamparam during the middle years of the thirteenth century.[48] He, however, continued to allow inscriptions to be carved in the name of the nominal sovereign, Rājarāja III, and he also allowed the Pāṇṭyas, who were sometimes allies and sometimes rivals of his, to make their claims on the temple walls as well. In addition to these complex political interests in Citamparam, the thirteenth century also seems to be the period of maximum interest in the temple on the part of North Indian pilgrims fleeing Islamic devastation of their temples, and this development also forced the temple complex to make concessions to the religious tastes of these clients who brought with them their own ideas of Śaiva orthodoxy.

The Kāḷi Temple

Between Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ and his minister Cōlakōṉ they left over sixty inscriptions in the temple complex and the neighboring Kāḷi temple, and had their hand in renovations and changes in the worship system almost as if they had direct responsibility for the operation of the temple. Their most important projects had to do with the construction of two small temples. One of these temples was for the goddess Piṭāriyar[49] (called Kāḷi in slightly later inscriptions) and was set up about half a mile from the temple complex, just beyond the official boundary of the town on the north. The construction of the Kāḷi temple outside of the town boundary sought to remove the early tradition of worshiping this goddess within the temple complex, for her worship included offerings of meat and liquor, which by thirteenth-century *brāhmaṇa* standards were considered polluting. Probably the earlier construction of the temple for the goddess Śivakāmacuntari had had the same intention, but the popular Kāḷi worship had not disappeared, and so Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ had it removed to the outskirts. It is difficult to know whether Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ, when he bowed to the demands of orthodoxy and moved Kāḷi worship to the outskirts of the town, expected Kāḷi worship to thrive or decline in its new location, but it has continued to be a strong part of the Citamparam tradition and is a flourishing temple today.

The Liṅkam *Temple*

The second small temple probably constructed by Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ was for the *liṅkam* form of Śivaṉ, and it was placed just behind the inner or "first" wall around the central shrine, to the north of the central shrine and facing east. The construction of the *liṅkam* shrine represented a further attempt to bring the Citamparam tradition within the canons of the prevailing orthodox practice of the Śaivas who were streaming in from North India. Evidence of the impact of this orthodoxy can be seen in the twelfth-century *Śiva Purāṇa*, for instance, where *liṅkam* worship is strongly encouraged, or in the fact that during this period many Śaiva temples are thought



Kāḻi temple

to have removed their images of Somaskantaṉ and other anthropomorphic forms and replaced them with *liṅkams*.[50] The tradition in Citamparam was so strong that the removal of the Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ image was unthinkable, but by constructing a more orthodox looking shrine with a *liṅkam* and having it face east, which had also by that time come to be recognized as the orthodox direction for a Śivaṉ temple to face, Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ felt the requirements of orthodoxy could be met.[51]

Walls and Gateways

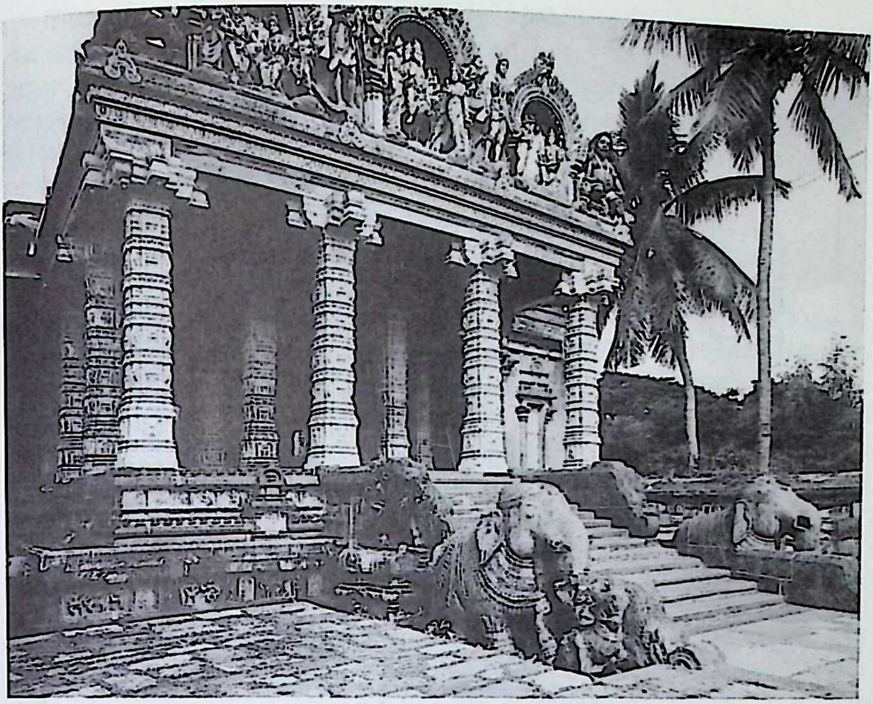
Once the *liṅkam* shrine was set in place, Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ set about trying to bring the outer walls into line with it, and takes credit in inscriptions for "building" both the southern and eastern *kōpurams* or gateways.[52] As we have already seen, there were *kōpurams* on those walls before his time, but it seems likely that he had them rebuilt, for the old southern gateway now has art of the thirteenth-century style, and the eastern one seems to have been moved from its old position, where it was in line with the western one. Its art too is thirteenth century and almost identical to that of the southern gateway.[53] Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ's rebuilding job put the eastern *kōpuram* roughly in line with the *liṅkam* shrine, and it would appear that he intended it to serve as the temple's main entrance in accord with the orthodoxy of his day, and to give the *liṅkam* shrine a central position in the overall scheme of the temple complex. His intention was partly successful in that the eastern entrance is now the most important one, but later builders put in a "second" wall around the most sacred half of the temple complex, and in doing so recentered the complex on the Ciṟṟampalam of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ and left the *liṅkam* shrine crowded into a corridor between the "first" and "second" walls.

The Pāṇṭya Temple

The Pāṇṭyas left almost as many inscriptions in Citamparam as Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ had, but most are scratched rather carelessly on the oldest remaining *kōpuram*, the western one. In addition to their interest in buildings, these inscriptions make the significant claims that the great Cuntara Pāṇṭya, who conquered this whole area in a sudden but passing march about 1252, performed the rituals of *vicaya apiṭēkam* "victory anointment" and *vīra apiṭēkam* "hero anointment" in the temple.[54] Having actually a greater devotion to Viṣṇu, however, he then went on to Śrīraṅkam temple where he boasted that he put on it a golden roof,[55] apparently to match that of Citamparam. In Citamparam he claims to have "built" the southern *kōpuram*,[56] meaning probably that he contributed to Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ's renovation. Nevertheless, as the senior sovereign he was able to get the Pāṇṭya "fish" crest engraved on the stone over the arch of the renovated southern *kōpuram*.

Tradition holds that it was also Cuntara Pāṇṭya who had the rather large Murukaṉ temple in the northwest corner of the compound constructed.[57] The most unusual feature of this temple is its ornate pillar style, a style that is like the pillars in the Etirampalam. This similarity in style might be explained either by imagining that these builders imitated what was considered an attractive style of earlier pillar, or, more likely, that some of the Etirampalam pillars were replaced at this time with those of the "new" style being used in the Murukaṉ temple. While Murukaṉ was long the favorite deity of the Pāṇṭya kingdom, his lovely temple in Citamparam has never become a major focus of worship.

In general, the era of "imperial rivalry" in the thirteenth century represents a time of cultural as well as political unrest, giving rise to a situation in which the conservative tradition of the Citamparam temple complex was challenged in a deep way. With



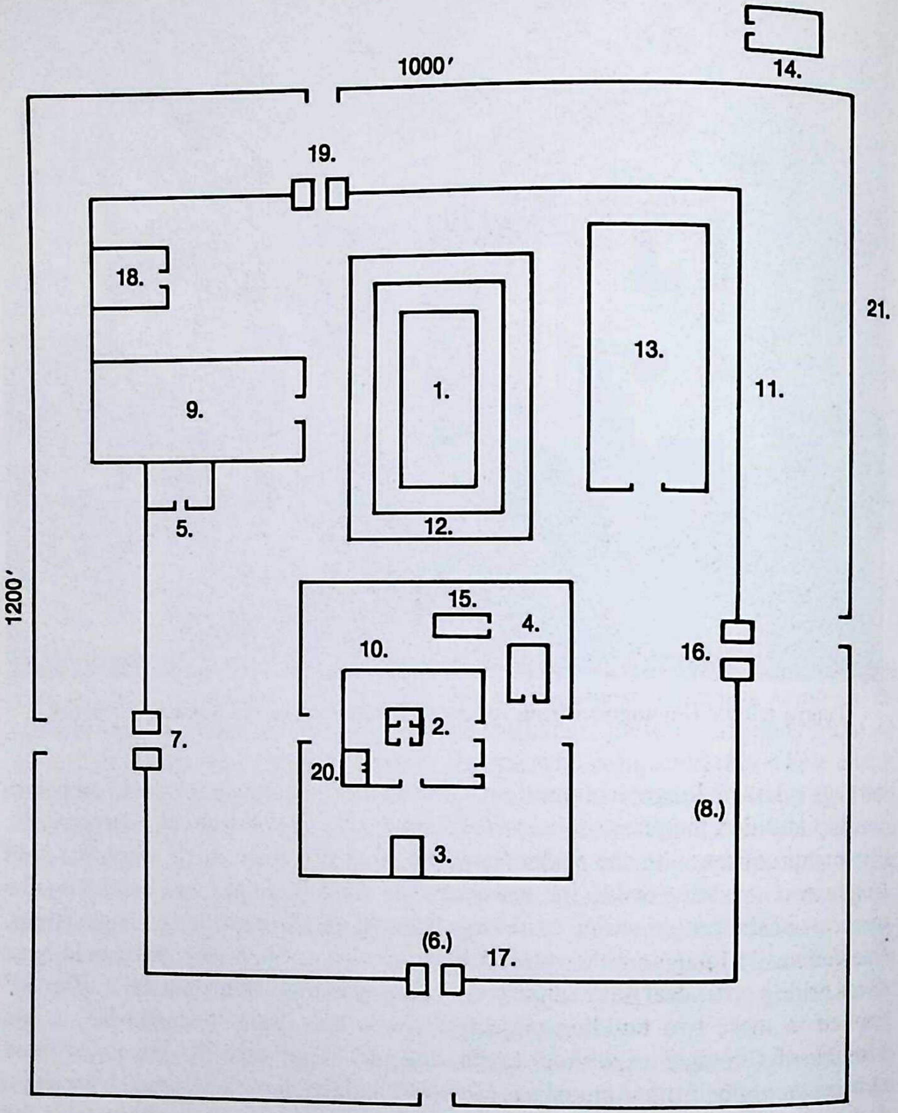
Pāṇṭya temple (Photograph from American Institute of Indian Studies, Varanasi)

the Cōḻa rulers no longer in a position to defend the special status of the Citamparam worship tradition the priests must have found the newer political voices worrisome. The compromises with the wider Śaiva tradition that were made when the Kāḷi temple was erected outside the town and the *liṅkam* temple was erected to the northeast of the central shrine must have been the result of protracted negotiations. One can easily imagine either project being carried out in a way that would have swept aside a great deal more of the earlier Citamparam tradition, but the "reforms" implicit in these two building projects seem to have been "blended in" to the tradition of Citamparam without major difficulty. Over time the impact of these changes would be further muted as still newer building programs would once again find ways of putting the focus even more firmly on the central shrine with the Dancing Image.

Period Five: The Sectarian Additions (1370–1660)

At the beginning of the fourteenth century the traditional ruling families of South India suddenly disappeared. The immediate causes of the political change were two Muslim armies that marched through the area in 1310 and 1323 respectively. While the second set of invaders stayed for some time, they did not set up an effective administration in the area. The true successor administration to the traditional rulers

DIAGRAM FIVE



Period Five: Sectarian additions
19. North Kōpuram Tower
20. Gōvintarājan̲ Temple
21. Fourth Wall

of the South was the Vicayanakaram Empire which had its base in Karnātaka to the northwest, but which ruled the whole of the South more or less continuously from the time it came to power toward the end of the fourteenth century until its regional governors or *nāyakkars* became virtually independent in the seventeenth century.

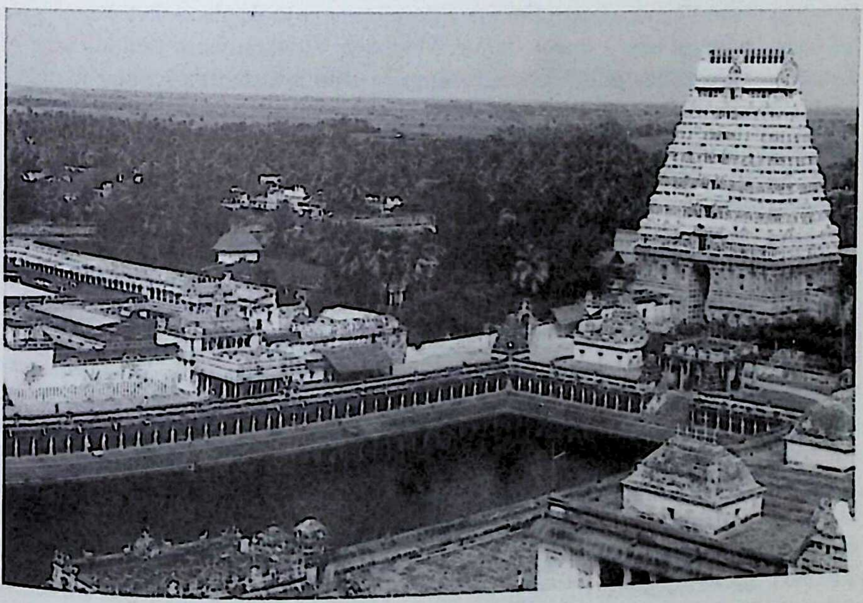
Citamparam did not figure in Vicayanakaram administrative plans as some of the other great temples of the South did,[58] and it does not have much of the very ornate style pillars, hallways, and *kōpurams* that became part of the largest temple complexes during this period. Only three minor building programs were carried out in Citamparam during Vicayanakaram times, and each was severely limited by the context in which it was undertaken.

The Northern Gateway

One of these projects was the completion of the northern *kōpuram,* which was in the relatively remote area of the temple complex's grounds out beyond the temple tank. The base of this tower was no doubt planned earlier and perhaps even the stone bases with their fine sculptures, which are in the Cōḻa style, were completed during the Cōḻa period. In any case Kṛṣṇatēvarāya (r. 1507–30) takes some pride in claiming credit for the tower which he no doubt had completed. (*ARE* 1892, 174, and 175; *ARE* 1913, 371, and 374)

The Viṣṇu Temple

The second building program of the Vicayanakaram court, which has already been briefly referred to, came in response to centuries of bitter agitation from Vaiṣṇavas about the claim of the Cōḻa court poet that Kulōttuṅka II had "thrown a Viṣṇu image into the sea." (Vaiṣṇava literature had earlier made four separate claims that



North Kōpuram (Śivakāmacuntari temple on left, Rāja Sabhā on right) some ruler had "restored" the image, but the multiple claims make it hard to take any of them as historical and serve primarily as an indication of the passion that the Vaiṣṇavas felt on the matter.) Acyutatēvarāya (r. 1530–41) in 1539 did in fact "restore" a Viṣṇu image (called Gōvintarājan) to the temple complex when he ordered a small temple constructed right in the already crowded inner courtyard near the Cit Sabhā (*ARE* 1913, 272; *ARE* 1915, 1). In separate projects at the end of the sixteenth century, a hallway from the east-facing Gōvintarājan shrine was opened right past the entrance of the Cit Sabhā, and a small *kōpuram* was constructed where the hallway passes through the "first" wall.[59] A busy worship routine is still carried on in this small temple according to the Vaikhānasa ritual that Acyuta specified, and it takes patience on the part of the worshipers of the Naṭarājan temple and the Gōvintarājan temple to see that they do not disrupt one another's worship.

The Rahacya *(Sanskrit: Rahasya)*

The final innovation of the Vicayanakaram period was very minor as a construction problem, but it represents a major modification in the worship system of the complex, and some explanation of religious developments in the area will be necessary in order to make clear why it took place.

The great philosopher and reformer Śaṅkara had made a big impact in parts of India during his own lifetime, which is thought to have been from 788 to 820. Although he was born in Kerala, which is part of the South, his personal influence in the southern half of Tamilnāṭu, where the hymn-singing traditions of the Śaivas and Vaiṣṇavas were just getting underway during his lifetime, was not notable. His teachings gradually became better known during the next four centuries, and in the founding of the Vicayanakaram Empire a development took place that was to give his ideas important new leverage. It was Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, a famous sage of a *maṭam* or ascetic center of Śaṅkara's teaching who inspired the young founders of the empire, Bukka and Harihara, to reconvert to their childhood Hindu faith and to turn on the Muslim generals in whose army they were then serving. The Vicayanakaram Empire thus had important reasons for supporting not only Hinduism in general, but also the specific plans of Vidyāraṇya to push Śaṅkara's teachings through a reform of all ascetic institutions into a centralized *Daśanāmi* or "Ten-Named" system based in four centers in the four corners of India. Many in the scholarly communities of Brāhmaṇas in South India became ardent disciples of Śaṅkara's less sectarian ideas of worship, and as his teachings became more popular some began to seek forms of worship less directly tied to images.

For most Vaiṣṇavas, Rāmānuja's earlier defense of devotional forms of image worship had proved convincing and popular, and Śaṅkara's influence there was limited. For some Śaivas the turn to the nonanthropomorphic *liṅkam* had provided an answer. For worshipers connected with Citamparam the search eventually led to the development of a unique ritual in which a *Rahacya* or "Secret" is worshiped in the empty area of the central chamber that is to the west of the Naṭarājan image. To make this worship visually meaningful, an elaborate stone screen was carved to cover this area and allow for the Emptiness to be visualized as camphor lights are passed over golden *vilva* leaves suspended in the darkness. This form of worship, which was not mentioned in earlier inscriptions or texts, came to be considered one of the unique features of Citamparam from Vicayanakaram times on, and it continues to be popular today. (See Story 6 for more on the influence of Śaṅkara and the school of Vedānta.)

The Fourth Wall

In addition to these minor building activities, the Vicayanakaram period saw a "fourth" wall added around the entire complex. This addition presumably disrupted the surrounding community quite a bit, but it added little to the temple complex. The area between the "third" and "fourth" walls is now closed off and used as a coconut grove.

In general the Vicayanakaram period is one in which the Citamparam tradition thinks of itself as enjoying great splendor. The immediate political links that the temple had enjoyed with the Cōḻa Empire were gone, but much of the high culture of the Vicayanakaram period was linked with Citamparam and many poems and hymns of praise from this period refer to the temple by the generic "Kōyil" or "The Temple." Theologians in both the Śaiva Siddhānta school and the Vedānta school associated themselves with the temple and often used its ritual as a basis for their theological reflections. It was certainly a time of continued glory, but the Vicayanakaram rulers and the landlords who looked to them for a lead were busy supporting temple-building programs in other places, and Citamparam saw a much smaller percentage of that activity than it had in earlier eras.

Period Six: The Renovations (1660–present)

By the end of the Vicayanakaram period, the Citamparam temple tradition was being treated with considerable reverence. Worshipers knew of special rituals, of legendary connections with the Cōḻa rulers, and of a special and mysterious community of priest-administrators. Political instability troubled the region for the next two centuries, and no important new building activity occurred in the temple complex. Important renovations related to handling the large crowds that continued to use the temple were undertaken periodically, and the cumulative effect of these many renovations has had an important impact on the appearance of the temple and the way in which worship there is conducted.

The "Second" Wall and the Covered Walkway

At some point donors recognized that the introduction of the *liṅkam* temple just outside the inner or "first" wall and the introduction of the Viṣṇu temple inside the inner wall had altered the sense of sacred boundaries in the temple complex and left the overall sense of sacredness a bit unclear. In order to deal with this problem, they put up a magnificent "second" wall, which has ornate gateways on the east and west (a dispute about the south led to a compromise in which a simple doorway was left for the periodic celebration of the Māci festival in its traditional form with the understanding that the doorway would normally be bricked up). This wall now clearly distinguishes the open courts of the third *pirakāram* from an enlarged sacred enclosure (the modern signs restricting access to "Hindus" are placed here), which places the Etirampalam, the Pērampalam, the *liṅkam* temple, the kitchens and other festival preparation areas together in a second walkway or *pirakāram*. This area is covered and provides a nice sense of being "inside" the temple, even though the more sacred area inside the "first" wall, where the Ciṟṟampalam and the Viṣṇu temple are found, is still open to the sky. This second *pirakāram* has late Vicayanakaram-style pillars and could be dated from the Vicayanakaram period, but that style of pillar has continued to be used in many temple renovations of a later era as well. As part of this major reorganization a new and very elaborate doorway was placed in the eastern side of the inner or "first" wall so that a worshiper could enter straight into the main shrine after entering the eastern gateway of the "second" wall. It is easy to see that the stonework around this elaborate doorway is a remodeling, and that the older southern doorway is the one that fits with other features of the original "first" wall.

Recent Renovations

In the present century a series of minor renovation projects has continued. In the inner courtyard a small black pillared hall has been set on the east of the central shrine, and similar black pillars have been placed around three sides of the central shrine. In the open courtyard on the eastern side of the third *pirakāram*, a huge processional cover with notably modern pillars has been set in place to cover the crowds during the great *apiṭēkam* or bath of the deities in the twice yearly festivals. Even while I was working in the temple, another renovation committee was set up, and the upper towers of all four *kōpurams* were being replastered and repainted, and the weaker porches of the "third" wall were being taken down. This renovation culminated in the Mahākumbhābhiṣekam or rededication celebrated in February 1987.

As we have already discussed in Story 1 on the temple priests, the past two centuries have not provided a comfortable atmosphere in which to maintain the traditions of this great temple complex. The traditional financial supporters of the temple have been adjusting to a new economic situation and the range of religious and cultural options has widened, so that the social setting in which this temple long held the place of highest honor can no longer be taken for granted. The relative poverty of the present priestly community is clear testimony to this change in status, but the temple building itself has not yet started to deteriorate significantly. Some parts of the large complex are no longer maintained or used regularly, but the central religious areas are continually retouched by the hands of new donors, and the sense that the temple is a living organism that will continue to change and grow goes on.

Conclusion

Throughout its history the Citamparam community has shown a marked conservatism in regard to building activity within the temple complex. The decision to preserve what must have appeared like "the little wooden building from the past," when the early Cōḻa kings were conquering far and wide and ordering stone temples built elsewhere in their new empire, was a powerful and clear statement of the kind of priorities that were going to typify the tradition of Citamparam. This strategy was probably worked out the first time as a result of a bitter disagreement between two opposed interests, those of a quiet religious community that enjoyed its isolated and already old worship center, and those of a rising new political power that wanted to use this religious center as part of its larger cultural design. In the original compromise the local community was able to keep its little hall, and the king was able to popularize it by placing a gold roof on it.

Once recognized the conservatism implicit in this first compromise seems to have become almost an explicit policy. When later building activity took place it was usually forced to build around existing structures even when they were very minor ones such as the tiny goddess shrine, which crowds the large Śivakāmacuntari temple. Awkward arrangements such as the positioning of the Etirampalam, which ceased to have its special relation with the central shrine once Kāḷi worship was moved elsewhere, or the *liṅkam* shrine, which came to be crowded into the second hallway, or even the extreme congestion of the inner courtyard with both Viṣṇu and Śivaṉ temples operating in a confined area, were all left in place with the resultant inconvenience used as a reminder to worshipers of the great historical significance of the whole complex.

One of the indirect results of the artistic conservatism that has characterized the Citamparam tradition is its tendency to interpret religion largely in aesthetic terms. The sacredness of the "place," and the "building," which Shulman (1980) saw as typically Tamiḻ in the earliest and most localized forms of South Indian religion, is given a more sophisticated form in the Citamparam tradition. The early Śaiva hymn writers of the seventh century go to great pains to praise the "little hall" standing "in the open" at Citamparam, and later eulogizers make the term "*pon*" or "golden," and its many compounds and variants, something equivalent to "divine." The Naṭarājaṉ tradition does certainly have some mythological form, and theological reflections on the image, which will be discussed later, have an important religious function as well, but the worshiper is most insistently enjoined to appreciate the "beauty" of the divine life as it is manifest in "Tillai," the ancient name used to express the quaint and beloved nature of the "place" as well as the trees which surround it.

Although the appreciation of the "aesthetic" dimension of the worship experience probably originally grew out of a partisan effort to preserve an old tradition and its building, the valuing of the "aesthetic" gradually had the effect of actually raising the level of awareness of all those concerned with the beauty of the temple complex. Valuing the beauty of the "little hall" and later of the "golden hall" were attitudes subsequently transferred to the towers and porches set up by Nāralōkavīraṉ, and specifically more and more to the exceptional workmanship of the Śivakāmacuntari temple and the royal audience hall or Rāja Sabhā. While the sense of the aesthetic was not able to prevent Acyutatēvarāya from crowding up the central area when he felt justice required him to place a Viṣṇu temple there, or modern donors from putting up modern pillars here and there, in many ways the aesthetic sense has become pervasive and the priests and musicians who serve in the temple take great pains to make their services aesthetically appealing.

Whereas in Western religious history "aestheticism" might be associated with "high church" ritual and political and theological orthodoxy, in Indian society the situation is somewhat more complex. Citamparam was certainly at times associated with the political establishment of the Cōḻas, but even then it had a temple building that was not typical of its time and probably rituals and theologies that were equally atypical. What the building activity in Citamparam seems to tell us is that the place was associated with a strong and distinctive religious tradition, but that that tradition was constantly in dialogue with the culture around it and that the tradition adapted itself to patterns of change in the culture, even as it strove to maintain its distinctive character.

In the process of adjusting to the culture, the temple tradition introduced sufficiently new ritual patterns from time to time that one is justified in describing the cult or ritual in different ways in different periods—provided one also acknowledges that much of the ritual activity must have remained the same throughout. One can in this sense describe stage 1 (the period of "The Thatch Hut") as a period when the Naṭarājaṉ cult was closely tied to an earlier Kāḷi cult; stage 2 (the period of "The Golden Roof") as a time when the temple tradition had to accommodate a peasant hymn-singing cult supported by the Early Cōḻa rulers; stage 3 (the period of "The Full Complex") as a time when the temple was the focus of the Later Cōḻa's royal ceremonial cult; stage 4 (the period of "The Orthodox Śaiva Revisions") as a time when the *liṅkam* cult had to be accommodated; and stage 5 (the period of "The Other Sectarian Additions") as a time when the wide-ranging Vedāntic tradition sought to have a say in redefining the worship system of this renowned temple complex.

In some ways these five stages represent five periods in the religious and cultural history of South India and could be viewed as a history of that larger cultural whole. In the story of the Citamparam building, these stages represent challenges, opportunities for the conservative Citamparam tradition to respond to the patterns of change in the larger culture. The Citamparam tradition would not be adequately accounted for if one were to see it as a simple product of these five eras in the cultural history of South India. Its tradition was too distinctive to be "explained" in that way, but it is also true that the tradition was greatly influenced by each of those cultural changes, and that in each case a major building program was undertaken in order to make possible the new ritual activity engendered by the culture change. Just what were the social, political, and intellectual forces involved in each of these culture changes will emerge more clearly in the chapters to come, but in the building itself we see a lasting testimony to both the aesthetic conservatism of the priestly community of Citamparam, which gave it its strong sense of continuity, and the forces of change, which required it to undertake new building activities in each new era. In order to understand more precisely what lay behind this building activity we will next turn our attention to the social and political leadership that persistently sought a role in determining the tradition of the temple complex.

Notes

1. Harle 1963.

2. Natarajan 1974.

3. My 1986 article was an initial attempt to fill this gap.

4. See Sastri (1935) 1975, pp. 101–102; Arunachalam 1979; and Natarajan 1974, p. 10.

5. *Excoccaria Agallocha.*

Until about the thirteenth century the town, the temple, and the priesthood were all identified by the name "Tillai."

Swamy in a 1977 article on sacred trees argued that South Indian temples were associated with trees in the course of writing up the sacred histories or *tala purāṇas* in the sixteenth century. In the two most famous cases, however, Tillai and Jampukesvara, the legends linking the temple and a tree are much older than the sixteenth century.

Swamy's later attempt (1979) to link the name "*tillai*" with a "*tilla*" or "cell" in North Indian languages seems to have been only a wild guess to prove his theory of a North Indian link with the ritual of this temple.

The name "Tillai" is still used affectionately when local people refer to either the temple or the town, and the shrub from which the name is derived is well known in the area.

6. See Sivaraman forthcoming.

7. Datta 1974 and *Travancore Archaeological Series.*

8. The Nāgārjunakoṇḍā sculpture is noted by many scholars including Sivaramamurti (1956) and Ramachandran (1958).

The similarity of the Draupadī *ratha* to the thatch-style temples of Bengal is noted by Rowland (1953), p. 183.

9. Gravely and Ramachandran (1934) 1977.

10. For a discussion of architectural styles, see Acharya 1921, and Chandra 1975.

11. The best argument for a yoga cult as being part of the Citamparam tradition is the frequent mention of *cittars* or yogis in the early literature. Tirumūlar is specifically described as a *cittar*, and is said to have entered the temple never to return. Similar statements are made in the biographies of Māṇikkavācakar and Appayya Dikshitar.

12. A major trail of scholarly confusion in the interpretation of the Etirampalam was started when the person writing a summary report on Citamparam for the 1914 *Annual Report on Epigraphy* made the casual comment (p. 88) that the inscription he was describing (*ARE* 1913, 290) was found on a wall "opposite" the *liṅkam* shrine, and suggested that perhaps the *liṅkam* shrine was meant when the inscription referred to "Opposite Hall."

Sadaśiva Paṇḍarathār (1949) 1967, Balasubrahmanyam (1979), Harle (1963), and Somasundaram (1955) 1963 all knew that the *liṅkam* shrine dates from the thirteenth century and did not really accept this quite odd suggestion, but they did allow this suggestion to throw them off track and take the position that the identification of the "Etirambalam" was a difficult problem.

What they should have focused on was the other inscription (*ARE* 1888, 119), which makes a more explicit reference to the "Etirampalam" when it says that the king of Cambodia sent a stone to Kulōttuṅka I which the emperor had built into the Etirampalam "*Tiruccirrampalam utaiyar kōyilil mun vaittatu*" ("in front of the shrine of the Lord of the Cirrampalam").

The epigraphist Kielhorn had as early as 1888 (*Indian Antiquary* vol. 23, p. 298, and *Epigraphica Indica* vol. 4, p. 70 and vol. 5, pp. 105, 106) correctly identified the "Etirampalam" in this inscription with the structure now called the Nṛtta Sabhā.

Recent scholarship has returned to the view of Kielhorn (conversations with T. Taṇṭapāṇi Tesikar on Nov. 15, 1980 and K. M. Venkataramiah on Dec. 1, 1980), and the priests of the temple take that identification for granted.

13. Balasubrahmanyam 1979.

14. Fergusson 1910, p. 302.

15. These legends are disguised in the *Citamparamāhātmya* of the twelfth or thirteenth century, presumably because it was considered distasteful to speak of the non-*brāhmaṇa* deity Kāḷi by both the priestly *brāhmaṇas* who wrote the text and the highly orthodox North Indian pilgrims for whom it was originally intended. The legends are very popular with present-day worshipers and are alluded to in ancient sculptural panels. See Shulman 1980, pp. 211–23.

16. Tirumaṅkai:

paimpoṉṉum muttum maṇiyum koṇrntu
paṭaimaṉṉavaṉ pallavarkōṉpaṇinta
cempoṉmaṇi māṭaṅkaḷ cūḻnta tillait
tiruccitrakūṭam ceṉṟu cērmiṉkaḷē
(*Periyatirumōḻi* 3.2.2b)

mūvāyira nāṉ muṟai yāḷar nāḷum
muṟaiyāl vaṇaṅka aṇaṅkāya cōti
tēvāti tēvan tikaḻkiṉṟa tillait
tiruccitra kūṭam ceṉṟu cērmiṉkaḷē
(*Periyatirumōḻi* 3.2.8b)

Kulacēkhara:

centaḷirvāy malarnakaicēr ceḻuntaṇ cōlait
tillainakart tiruccitra kūṭattaṉṉuḷ
antaṇarkaḷ orumūvāyirava rētta
aṇimaṇiyā caṉattirunta ammāṉ tāṉē
(*Tirumōḻi*)

I do not accept the argument that is sometimes used that a poetic reference in Māṇikkavācakar's *Tirukkōvaiyār* to "Viṣṇu lying prostrate in the hall of Tillai" also refers to the worship of Viṣṇu in Citamparam. I would think that the reference is to the well-known myth of Viṣṇu as a boar diving into the earth to find the feet of Śivaṉ, and the implication of the verse is that in Citamparam he can see at least one foot and still begs to see the other. (A somewhat similar reference in the inscription *ARE* 1888, 120, to Viṣṇu and other gods coming to worship Śivaṉ, and needing the permission of Nanti, is also nothing but a Śaiva poetic image.)

17. The best known of these traditions is found in the *Divyasūricharitam*, the *Guruparampara*, and the *Kōyil Oḷuku*. They describe how Rāmānuja hid in the Hoysaḷa country during the Cōḻa persecution, and then how he helped restore the fortunes of the Vaiṣṇavas. Among his efforts in this regard was a trip to Tirumalai where he consecrated the Gōvintarājaṉ image from Citamparam in a temple there. He was assisted in this by loyal members of the Three Thousand priests of Citamparam and a local ruler named Ghaṭṭidēva Yādavarāya.

Other Vaiṣṇava hagiographies credit the consecration to Mahācarya, alias Doḍḍācārya (*Prapannāmṛtam*); or to Vēdānta Dēśika with the help of Gōpaṇācārya (*Guruparampara*); or to the Vicayanakaram ruler Rām Rāja.

18. *ARE* 1913, 272; *ARE* 1915, 1. See further discussion later in this chapter.

19. The poet Oṭṭakkuttaṉ makes the claim three times:

> panavi muḻutuṭaiya poṟṟāṭiyun tāṉum
> navani curarcuruti yārppa-navaniti tū
> pēttaṟ karunkatavuḷ ellaiyilā ṇntak
> kūttaik kaḷikkūrak kumpiṭṭup-poṟṟinamēṟṟ
> illait tirumaṉṟiṉ muṉṟiṟ-ciṟutēyvat
> tollaik kuṟumpa tokutteṭuttu
> (*Kulōttuṅkaccōlan Ulā*)
> (cited in Natarajan, 1974)
>
> cūṭṭat tirumakuṭan cūṭṭiyapin-ṇātaṭu
> poṇṇiṟ kuyiṟṟip puṟampiṟ kuṟumpanaittu
> muṉṉnir kaṭalkaḻiṉ mūḻkuvitta-ceṉṉi
> tirumakal cīrāja rājaṉ
> (*Rājarājaccōlan Ulā*)
> (cited in Natarajan, 1974)
>
> muṉṉiṟ kiṭanta taṭaṅkaṭal pōy
> muṉṉaik kaṭalpukap piṉṉait tillai
> maṉṟiṟ kiṭankaṇṭa koṇṭaṉ maintaṉ
> marakata mēruvai vāḻttiṉavē
> (*Takkayākapparaṇi*)
> (cited in Natarajan, 1974)

20. The legends on Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ are frequently referred to. They are alluded to in early but undated literary sources (*Pūranānūru* and *Kalavali*); in the hymns of Campantar, Cuntarar, and Tirumaṅkai between the seventh and ninth centuries; in numerous inscriptions; and, of course, in the hagiographies of Nampi and Cēkkiḻār of the ninth and twelfth centuries respectively.

21. The Anbil Copper Plates of Cuntara Cōḻa (960) describe Ātitya's conquest along the Kāvēri River valley to the mountains on the west coast and his subsequent return with a horde of gold, which he used to build temples for Śivaṉ all along the river valley (*Epigraphica Indica* vol. 15).

Nampi (verses 50, 64, and 82) and Cēkkiḻār in their hagiographies also seem to say that he used the gold to gild the roof of the shrine in Citamparam (see Somasundaram 1955, 1963, p. 112). Umāpati, the most famous priest of the temple, also says in his *Tiruttoṇṭar Purāṇasāram*, verse 59, that it was Ātitya who gilded the roof.

See also Sadaśiva Paṇḍarathār 1949, 1967 31–32, and K. Veḷḷaivāraṇaṉ (1962) *Paṉṉiru Tirumuṟai Varalāṟu*, Part I.

22. Parāntaka's son Kaṇṭarātitya was a devout poet who wrote a poem *Tiruvicaippā* (9th *Tirumuṟai*) on the Citamparam temple (See Stories 1 and 6) in which he says:

> tennanāṭum īḻamumkoṇṭiṟaṟ cenkōṟ cōḻan koḷi vēntan Cempiyan ponnaṇinta . . .
> Tillaiyampalattu
>
> the hall in Tillai was covered with gold by Cempiyan, the Cōḻa who with his arm conquered Iḻam (Śrī Laṅka). (8)

The reference could be to his father or grandfather, for both used the name "Cempiyan." The later Leyden copperplate (*Epigraphica Indica* vol. 13) of Rājarāja I (r. 985–1014) refers to Parāntaka as "covering the mansion of Indumauli (Śivaṉ) at Vyāghrapura (Tigertown) with pure gold brought from the four quarters which he had subdued by the prowess of his arm."

The still later copperplate of Tiruvālaṅkāṭu (*South Indian Inscriptions* vol. 3, no. 205, verse 53) during the reign of Rājendra (r. 1012–44) describes Parāntaka as a "banner of the Solar Race" who "built for Purari (Śivan̲), who earlier had resided on the silver mountain (Kailās), a golden house called the Dabhra Sabhā (Little Hall) and thus put to shame the Lord of Wealth (Kubera)."

23. The most notable of the later claims to have gilded the roof is that of the sister of Kulōttuṅka I, named Kuntavai Āl̲vār, who lists a golden vessel, a mirror, and a golden roof among her gifts to Naṭarājan̲ (*ARE* 1888, 199; translated in *Epigraphica Indica* vol. 4, p. 70 and vol. 5, p. 105).

Kulōttuṅka's son Vikrama claimed all the renovations carried out by Nāralōkavīran̲ in his father's day, *as well as* the gilding of the roof (*ARE* 1958, 314).

In the *Kulōttuṅka Cōlan Ulā* of the court poet Oṭṭakkuttan̲, the claim is made that Kulōttuṅka II gilded the "Pērampalam," and this claim is repeated in inscriptions such as *ARE* 1928–29, 315, 349, and *ARE* 1903, 268. As we have already seen in earlier inscriptions the name "Pērampalam" was always used to refer to the present-day Deva Sabhā which has a copper roof. Perhaps at a later point the name was used to refer to the "new" royal hall or the present-day Rāja Sabhā which was probably built by Kulōttuṅka II and which is very ornate and probably originally had a gold roof over one area. Certainly the claim does not refer to the gilding of the Cir̲r̲ampalam which had been gilded centuries earlier.

The final claim is that of Cuntara Pāṇṭya in the middle of the thirteenth century when he conquered the Citamparam area and claimed to have weighed himself in gold, gilded the roof, and made a number of other donations (*ARE* 1913, 338, 363; *ARE* 1962–63, 569, 570, 571; *ARE* 1892, 180, 181, 182). He was clearly fascinated by the golden roof and hastened to the Śrīraṅkam temple of Viṣṇu where he did gild the *vimāna* there (*Epigraphica Indica* vol. 3, p. 11), but in Citamparam he might have done a refurbishing at most.

24. *ARE* 1888, 120; *South Indian Inscriptions* 4, no. 225, verse 10.

25. The priestly manual for festivals describes the marriage of Śivan̲ and Śivakāmacuntari as taking place in the Hundred Pillared Hall on the day *after* the end of Śivakāmacuntari's festival. See *Śrī Cidambara Kṣetra Sarvasvam*, vol. 2, *Śrī Citsabhesotsava Sūtram*, (1982).

26. *South Indian Inscriptions* vol. 4, no. 225, verse 10.

27. See Lorenzen 1972.

28. The Jaina links with the Mauryans and Sātavāhanas; the Buddhists with the Mauryan Aśoka, the Kuśānas, and the Pālas; and the Vaiṣṇavas with the Guptas and Rāṣṭrakūṭas are all well documented.

29. The independent stands of the emperors and the priests are evident in a number of ways.

The fact that the ritual and building remained so much the same when the emperors were there so regularly is testimony in itself.

The official legend books called the *Citamparamāhātmya* and *Kōyil Purāṇa*, probably written by the priests, describe in legendary form how the interdependence of priests and emperors worked.

Two well-known stories from other sources reinforce the point. In the *Periya Purāṇa* the story is told of a petty chieftain (some say a Kaḷabhra) of Kaḷantai, who later became a Śaiva saint named Kūr̲r̲uva. He asked the priests of Citamparam to anoint him king. They refused on the grounds that they only anointed Cōl̲as, but this act put their lives in danger and they were forced to flee for a time to Kerala. (See Sastri [1935] 1975, pp. 105–6). The even more famous story is from the *Tirumur̲ai Kaṇṭa Purāṇa* of Umāpati, which tells of the tension when Ātitya asked Nampi to edit the *Tēvāram* hymns and the priests were reluctant to give up the only complete copy, which was locked up in a room in the temple. Eventually

Vināyakaṉ pointed to the room and the saints themselves appeared to the priests and asked them to provide the ant-eaten manuscript. They finally did.

30. *ARE* 1888, 120, verse 12; *ARE* 1913, 297; *ARE* 1913, 275; *ARE* 1913, 360; *ARE* 1913, 268 and *Kōyil Purāṇa*, section 5.

31. *ARE* 1888, 120, verse 8. The problem of numbering and naming the concentric walls in Citamparam is somewhat complex. I follow the epigraphists' reports in speaking of four walls counting from the inside out. Some studies (Somasundaram, Natarajan, and Balasubrahmanyan) follow the practice of the most orthodox worshipers who count the wall of the central shrine as the first wall and thus get five walls. The purpose of that unusual practice is to be able to visualize the temple as like the human body in having five *kośas* or "sheaths," and thus allow the pilgrim to proceed toward the center by circumambulating five times.

32. Balasubrahmanyan 1943, 1944. These inscriptions were later copied as *ARE* 1958–59, 331, 337.

33. Natarajan 1974, p. 21.

34. This is discussed by Sivaramamurti (1974).

35. Natarajan 1974, p. 21.

36. *ARE* 1888, 119, and *Epigraphica Indica* vol. 5, pp. 105–6.

> A stone was presented to the emperor by the king of Cambodia. By the order of the emperor that stone was placed in front of the shrine of the deity in the Holy Ciṟṟampalam. The stone was placed in the upper front row of stones in the Etirampalam opposite to the shrine.

37. *ARE* 1888, 120; also *South Indian Inscriptions* vol. 4, no. 225; also *South Indian Temple Inscriptions* pp. 1271, 1272, 1273; translated in Swamy 1979, pp. 123–34, and Balasubrahmanyan 1979, pp. 23–26.

38. Harle's (1963) book-length study of the *kōpurams* is a fine work in art history, even though it makes major mistakes on the general history of the temple complex (including the outrageous suggestion, pp. 64 and 165, that *ēḻukōpuram* could mean seven *kōpurams* in one temple, rather than the well-known meaning of "seven-story" *kōpuram*).

In my 1986 article, I discussed the art of the *kōpurams* in considerable detail. There are basically three different art traditions represented on these walls.

The tradition I consider the oldest is that of the forty sculpture panels on the lower level, which are now badly damaged because they are within easy reach of worshipers, renovators, or vandals. They contain representations of goddesses such as Bhadrakāḷī and Durgā, gods such as Piḷḷaiyār (Gaṇeśaṉ or Vināyakaṉ) and Murukaṉ (Subramanyaṉ or Kantaṉ) and sages. Some of these panels are very popular places of worship and have shrines built over them and priests attending them.

A second tradition involves the placing of small square panels inside the entrance passages with female dancers portraying the 108 *karaṇas* or dance postures used in classical dancing, and set out in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra*. Sivaramamurti (1974) thinks this art in Citamparam imitates the arrangement in Tañcāvūr where 108 panels of a male dancer, Śivaṉ, are placed around the base of the shrine. The direction of dependence is not so clear, however, for an early gateway tower almost certainly existed in Citamparam before the Tañcāvūr temple was built. It seems more likely that the religious development would have been in the direction of using Śivaṉ as the dancer later in the tradition rather than that an early tradition of using Śivaṉ as the dancer would later have been modified. It should also be noted that the tradition of placing *karaṇas* on temple walls predates both Citamparam and Tañcāvūr and is found, for instance, in Prāmbaṇam in Java in the ninth century. See Sivaramamurti 1974, p. 348.

The third tradition of art on the *kōpurams* is the gallery of twenty-six representations of Śivaṉ found on the upper story of the tower bases. This arrangement is found in many major temples during later centuries, but probably appears for the first time here. The standard arrangement is:

Outside (left to right)

1. Gajāsura
2. Kevala Candraśekhara
3. Somāskandha
4. Doorkeeper
5. Doorkeeper
6. Bhikṣāṭana
7. Ardhanārī
8. Tripurāntaka

Inside (left to right)

1. Vṛṣabhāntika
2. Lingodbhava
3. Kankāla
4. Doorkeeper
5. Doorkeeper
6. Kalyāṇasundara
7. Haryardha
8. Gangādhara

Left End
(seen from outside)

1. Caṇḍeśānugraha
2. Viṉādhara Dakṣiṇāmurti
3. various
4. Pāśupata
5. Kālāri

Right End
(seen from outside)

1. Urdhva Tāṇḍava
2. Nṛttamurti
3. various
4. Kirātārjuna
5. Alingana Candraśekhara

(Ritual requirements sometimes dictate a shift in the panels depending on the direction a particular tower faces, and in my earlier article I have provided the details on these shifts as they are found in the Citamparam temple.)

39. Rowland 1953, p. 193.

40. Balasubrahmanyam 1943, 1944.

41. The definitive history of Cōḻa temples is that of Balasubrahmanyam 1971, 1977, 1979.

42. This point is made in his standard *piracacti* (Sanskrit: *praśasti)* or verse of praise, which opens each of his inscriptions. He also uses the terms *kulanāyakam* or "family deity" when describing Naṭarājaṉ in this context.

43. *ARE* 1902, 163; *ARE* 1894, 165; *ARE* 1918, 268.

44. *Kulōttuṅka Cōlan Ulā*; *ARE* 1921, 68; *ARE* 1904, 122. *ARE* 1902, 155, is an inscription found in Tirumanikkuli, but it describes the ruler as "Kulōttuṅka who crowned himself so as to shed luster on Tillai city," indicating that his coronation took place in Citamparam.

The *Kulōttuṅka Cōḻan Ulā* of the court poet Oṭṭakkuttaṉ claims that Kulōttuṅka gilded the "Pērampalam." This claim is repeated in inscriptions such as *ARE* 1928–29, 315; *ARE* 1928–29, 349; and *ARE* 1903, 268. (See note 23 on gilding claims.) It seems quite possible that the name "Pērampalam" or "Big Hall," which had for centuries been used of the earlier royal audience hall or Deva Sabhā, was transferred to the new royal audience hall or Rāja Sabhā when it was built in the twelfth century. The idea that the name was probably transferred is supported by the fact that in the fourteenth-century *Kōyil Purāṇa* it says that the "Pērampalam is the royal seat," certainly at that point referring to the Rāja Sabhā.

The Rāja Sabhā does seem to have a small section of roof that might have formerly been covered in gold.

These references are probably indications of what we suspect on other grounds, namely that Kulōttuṅka II was the builder of the Rāja Sabhā.

45. The story of the composition is told in *Cēkkilār Nāyanār Purāṇam* by Umāpati. Some scholars argue that it was Kulōttuṅka III who sponsored the composition.

46. *ARE* 1907, 190, is an inscription in Sanskrit eulogizing Kulōttuṅka III on the temple wall of Tribhuvanam. Among his accomplishments are listed building projects at Citamparam, including a *mukha manṭapa*, a *kōpuram*, and a veranda for the goddess. These would appear to have been renovations of earlier structures.

47. Citamparam alone has over forty inscriptions, mostly recording the dedication of flower gardens to the temple.

48. Most histories are written from the point of view of the Cōḻas and play down the central role of Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ during this period. M. S. Govindasamy (conversation August 1980) has studied the role of what might be called the "feudatory" or "local" rulers of whom Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ was the most important. He was a Kāṭava ruler with considerable power between 1231 and 1279. (Some scholars think there were two rulers with the same name.) See, for instance, *ARE* 1922, 418, which claims that he defeated the Cōḻa king at Teḷḷāṟu, as well as the Pāṇṭya and the Hoysaḷa, and that his abiding devotion was to the deity of Citamparam.

49. *ARE* 1903, 401, explicitly says land was for this purpose. Numerous later inscriptions of this ruler are found on the walls of this temple.

50. *Śiva Purāṇa* I.5: Srinivasan 1960, p. 61; Soundara Rajan 1969, pp. 144–45; Lockwood, Siromoney, and Dayanandan 1974.

51. There is no inscriptional record on the building of the shrine. The first inscriptions about it are *ARE* 1913, 305, 307, in which Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ orders "offerings for the Dakṣiṇamūrti image on the south wall of the shrine of Mūlastānam-Uṭaiyār." In using the title "Mūlastānam" Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ is clearly claiming that, while his temple may be new, the *liṅkam* image is the "original" deity of the temple complex. This title has continued to be used in popular worship and some orthodox Śaivas like to take it literally and think the *liṅkam* was there before the Naṭarājaṉ. The tradition of *liṅkam* worship in this place may or may not be old, but there is no evidence of it before the thirteenth century, and the worship traditions of the temple both before that time and since have centered on Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ.

The *liṅkam* temple has been renovated in more recent times.

52. *ARE* 1921, 285, and *South Indian Inscriptions,* vol. 12, no. 119; *ARE* 1902, 463, and *South Indian Inscriptions,* vol. 8, no. 51; *ARE* 1881, 198.

53. I discussed these problems at greater length in Younger 1986.

54. Inscriptions of the *Pudakottai State* 1941, 192, 370; and *ARE* 1929–30, 616.

55. *Epigraphica Indica*, vol. 3, p. 11.

56. *ARE* 1921, 285, and *South Indian Inscriptions,* vol. 12, no. 119; *ARE* 1902, 463.

57. *ARE* 1958–59, 328, mentions building a stone temple but does not describe it or its location.

58. Early in the period Śrīraṅkam seemed to be the most favored temple. Later Tirupati, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai, and Maturai became prominent. Dozens got more attention than Citamparam.

59. This last renovation, which we discussed briefly in Story 1, provoked the encounter between the priests of the temple and Krishnappa Nāyaka, the governor who arrived to see that work proceeded in spite of their objections. This clash, which involved the death of some of the priests, was witnessed by the Jesuit traveler Father N. Pimenta:

> Whether it is lawful to place the sign of Perumāl (Viṣṇu) in the temple at Citamparam was the question. Some urged that it was right and others adamantly objected. The Nāyak of Gingi decreed that a gateway for Viṣṇu should be erected in the temple. . . .
>
> The Priests of the temple, who were also the treasurers stood against him and threatened to throw themselves down from the towers. The Smārta Brāhmaṇas working in the temple swore they would do likewise after performing the funerals of the others, but they eventually did not. . . .

> Krishnappa Nāyak went ahead without hesitation. Whereupon the priests, climbing one of the high *kōpurams* of the temple, started to cast themselves down even while the Nāyak was in the temple. . . .
>
> About twenty had perished in that way before we departed. The Nāyak was angered and asked his gunners to shoot the rest. Two more were killed in that way and the rest fled to other places. A woman too became so excited in the midst of this quarrel that she cut her own throat.

Quoted in Heras 1927 and cited in Natarajan 1974, p. 59 (Edited by author).

Story 4

The Donors and Their Political Connections

As we saw in the previous chapter, South Indian temples are built over many centuries and are the products of many hands. Some of the hands involved are, of course, those of the sculptors and architects employed from time to time by various people, but there are also the kings and landlords who provide the funds that make the construction of the temple possible. In the present chapter we will focus our attention on the kings, landlords, and other social leaders who used their leverage as the custodians of surplus goods within society to lend their support to the Citamparam temple. As we examine the legends or inscriptions that link these social leaders with Citamparam, we will not only be asking who they were and what they did in Citamparam, but also what place they had in the social history of the region and what place they tried to give Citamparam in that social and political history.

Early Political Contacts with Citamparam

Prior to the eleventh or twelfth century, when the present walls were constructed and donors started carving inscriptions on the walls, we know about the sociopolitical situation in the environs of the temple only on the basis of either legendary material or nontemple sources. In spite of these limitations a great deal is now known about this earlier period and the general picture is quite reliable.

As was explained in the preceding chapter, the temple complex in its earliest phase, prior to 850, seems to have been set in a remote forest of *tillai* trees far from the centers of trade, politics, and cultural life in South India. During the early centuries of the common era, the Kāvēri River basin, which was later to become the heartland of the great Cōḻa Empire, was a relatively underdeveloped area slowly learning the technology of irrigation. Citamparam, which is now in the farthest northeast corner of the Kāvēri basin, was included in the delta only late in this development when the longest artificial channel, the Koḷḷiṭam, was opened up to extend the range of the river system to the north. During the early centuries of the common era the centers of trade, politics, and culture were in Maturai to the south of the Kāvēri, where the Pāṇṭya Empire was based, and in Kāñcīpuram to the north, where the Pallava Empire set up its capital a bit later. Maturai was the center of the early maritime trade and was conveniently located in relation to Śrī Lanka off its east coast and Kerala to its west. Kāñcīpuram was the natural southern base for trade with North India, and a natural link with developing societies of Southeast Asia. Legendary and hymnodic accounts suggest that even in this period powerful interests in these different centers had contact with Citamparam. Some of these stories might be anachronistic projections of later interests, but each must be examined with care for it was an era of dramatic developments in trade, politics, and culture, and Citamparam, while itself not a major center, might have been linked to political interests for a variety of reasons.

Hiraṇyavarmaṉ

The most colorful story about possible early political involvement in Citamparam is found in the twelfth- or thirteenth-century legend book on the temple, which describes a Bengal king named Hiraṇyavarmaṉ, ''Golden Ruler,'' who was healed of a skin disease after bathing in the temple tank, and who later brought his whole court to Citamparam and set up its grand buildings. In a later chapter (Story 5) we will examine this story itself in an attempt to understand the intentions of its twelfth- or thirteenth-century authors,[1] but we must in the present context ask if there is even a remote possibility that the later story reflects an actual event. Kulke (1970) in his study of the legend reads it as a fictional narrative which is intended to legitimize the power of Kulōttuṅka I, the Cōḻa emperor of the eleventh century, during whose reign Kulke believes the text to have been written. Most modern Indian scholars have not found Kulke's arguments convincing, and they have tended to read the story as a mistaken reference to a Pallava king, a number of whom were known to have visited the temple and a few of whom have a ''Hiraṇya'' or ''golden'' attribute in one of their titles.[2] The authors of the story may have been creating fiction, as Kulke believes, or they may have made a historical error, as many historians believe, but neither explanation accounts very well for the very specific reference to Bengal, which is central to the story.[3] We must at least ask whether the story as it presents itself is in any sense plausible.

The time period in which the story purports to have taken place is very early in the life of the sacred place that later came to house the Citamparam temple complex. As the story is told, the place was then inhabited by only a few sages living on the banks of the pond. The king, who had abandoned his kingdom because of a skin disease, arrived at the pond in the middle of the forest looking for healing. The kind of undeveloped situation described could only have been found if the event took place well before the time when the three *Tēvāram* hymn singers visited a neat little temple in the seventh and eighth centuries, perhaps in the early centuries of the common era. Little detail is known about Bengal history prior to the rise of the Pāla Empire in the seventh century, except that it was divided into several kingdoms (the story about Hiraṇyavarmaṉ describes him as coming from Gauda Dēsa) and was on the fringes of the political power centers of North India.[4] Bengal and South India certainly had some knowledge of one another during these centuries, for both were highly civilized and it seems likely there were sages going back and forth by foot and there was maritime trade along the coast.

It was not that uncommon for Indian princes to go on pilgrimage. Both the great Indian epics, the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*, involve stories of wandering Indian princes. Such princes play a fascinating role in the spread of cultural values throughout South and Southeast Asia during this period. Many dynastic histories start with the arrival of a wandering Indian prince, not only in India but in Śrī Laṅka, Cambodia, and Sumatra as well, and the cultural identity of the society is then defined in terms of this fortuitous circumstance.[5] The story of Hiraṇyavarmaṉ fits this general type and also goes on to suggest that he was the founder of the Cōḻa dynasty.[6] Whatever one thinks about particular features of the story as it was told in later centuries, the core of the story, which has a wandering Bengal prince arrive in remote Citamparam in the early centuries of the common era, seems possible, and if it happened it could well explain the cultural and political syncretism that was to become the hallmark of this unusual religious center.

Kaḷabhras

A second possible early political contact with Citamparam is associated with the mysterious Kaḷabhra people. The reference to the Kaḷabhras that historians usually focus on comes from the Vēḷvikuṭi grant of the Pāṇṭyas, which condemns them as uncivilized because they devastated the Pāṇṭya kingdom sometime around the third century.[7] While it is understandable that the Pāṇṭyas would not like them, there is some evidence that they were effective rulers. A Buddhist author of the time, Buddhadatta, describes them as "the hub of the Cōḻa country's chariot,"[8] and legends about their most famous ruler, Accutavikkanta, say that he locked up the kings of the Pāṇṭyas, Cēras, and Cōḻas together.[9] What interests us here most about the Kaḷabhras is that there is some evidence that they made Citamparam their capital.[10]

The later hagiographies of Śaivism describe a ruler of Kaḷantai, who some think was a Kaḷabhra, by the name of Kūṟṟuva, who wanted to be crowned by the priests of Citamparam. The legend is that they refused on the grounds that they had obligations to the Cōḻa family, and they were therefore forced to flee to Kerala. The story is that Śivaṉ then arranged for the coronation, and the king eventually left his throne and became a Śaiva saint.

There are many theories on the origins of the Kaḷabhra people, and it is not necessary here to go into them in detail. The only point relevant for the present study is to note that Citamparam, being outside the range of control of the Pāṇṭya rulers in Maturai, would serve as a good base whether the Kaḷabhras were local rebels, invaders from the north, or allies of the Śrī Laṅkas—the three most prominent theories.[11]

The related question on which we have no information is whether the Kaḷabhras had any role in the early development of the sacred center of Citamparam. Because the Vēḷvikuṭi grant complains about their mistreatment of *brāhmaṇas*, and because the Buddhist author, Buddhadatta, speaks well of them, there is some tendency to think they were Buddhists.[12] Would such a roundabout connection raise even a remote possibility that the Citamparam center might once have been a Buddhist center? Even discussing such a possibility might seem foolish in the light of the stauchly Śaiva reputation of the place in later times, but there are many Buddhist and Jaina centers that were later used for Hindu worship in South India,[13] and in the case of Citamparam there is, in addition to the tenuous stories of the Kaḷabhras, one clue that might point to an early Buddhist connection. That clue has to do with the legends of Māṇikkavācakar, which provide our third possible strand of political connection with Citamparam in these early centuries.

Māṇikkavācakar

Māṇikkavācakar was one of the greatest saints and hymn singers of South Indian Śaivism. The legends of his life place him in the fifth century and describe him as a minister in the Pāṇṭya court who spent the last half of his life in ascetic devotion in Citamparam.[14] (Many modern scholars follow Pope's [1900] lead in dismissing the historicity of these legends and place Māṇikkavācakar in a later century. We will discuss this complex dating problem in Story 6.)

The part of the Māṇikkavācakar cluster of legends of interest in this discussion of kingship is the story that his first contact with Citamparam came about because a king in that place was hosting a group of Buddhist scholars from Śrī Laṅka along with their king and his dumb daughter.[15] The Pāṇṭya king sent Māṇikkavācakar along to debate with the Buddhists on behalf of Śaivism, and though the debate was inconclusive, Māṇikkavācakar was able miraculously to heal the king's daughter, and the king and the Buddhists were converted to Śaivism. The story fits well with the religious situation of the fifth century when Śrī Laṅka Buddhism was flourishing, when the great Indian-born scholar Buddhaghoṣa was editing the Pāli Canon and writing his compendium of doctrine, the *Viśuddhi Magga*, and when Buddhist centers were still reasonably popular in South India as well as in Śrī Laṅka. If in fact there was such a dramatic debate in the history of Citamparam it would help explain how this remote place came to have such an attraction for later political figures from a number of different kingdoms, and also how the very special connection that still exists between Citamparam and the branch of Śaiva devotion connected with Māṇikkavācakar came about. (See Story 6 for more on Māṇikkavācakar.)

Mahendravarman

One of the most interesting rulers of South India was the Pallava ruler Mahendravarman I who lived in the first half of the seventh century. He took the title *Vichitrachitta* or Curious Minded and showed an interest in many religions. The Śaiva legends about the hymn singer Appar describe how he was summoned by Mahendravarman, who was a Jaina at the time, when Appar converted back to Śaivism from Jainism. Appar did miracles for the ruler and he too was converted to Śaivism. Cuntarar, the slightly later Śaiva hymnist, admonished people in his hymn at Citamparam to obey "the Pallava ruler" (see Story 6 for details). At much the same time Tirumaṅkai, one of the Vaiṣṇava hymn singers who visited Citamparam, described a Pallava ruler who had visited the Vaiṣṇava image in Citamparam.[16] Perhaps at the time Citamparam was considered to be in the Pallava domain.

Kōcceṅkaṇān̲

The final story about royal contact with Citamparam in the period before inscriptions began to appear and form a reliable historical backdrop involves the Cōl̲a family's legendary progenitor, Kōcceṅkaṇān̲ or "King Red Eye," whom we have already had occasion to mention. According to the legends of the Cōl̲a family,[17] Kōcceṅkaṇān̲ was born in the Citamparam temple after his parents who were without child went there and prayed for an heir. The special circumstances of his birth, described earlier, involved his mother's fear that he might be born at an inauspicious hour and her arranging to have her legs tied and have herself hung upside down until the inauspicious time had passed. When the child was born it was red of eye and skin and was named *kō - ceṅ - kaṇān̲* or "King - Red - Eye." As a ruler Kōcceṅkaṇān̲ won a reputation for devotion and was credited with the construction of seventy Śaiva temples at various places within the Kāvēri valley.

As with each of the other stories from the period before inscriptions were common, the date of Kōcceṅkaṇān̲ remains a mystery. Because the name is found in a couple of Caṅkam poems[18] and because most Caṅkam poems are thought to be from the early centuries of the common era, some history books place him in the third century. On the other hand ninth-century inscriptions refer to him rather like a family grandfather, and it has been suggested that he might be closer to the seventh or eighth century[19] when we know temple construction was flourishing under the inspiration of the three itinerant *Tēvāram* singers. Whatever his date, the two features of the Kōcceṅkaṇān̲ stories of greatest interest for the present study are that he was personally involved in a miraculous event, and that he was perceived to be a sectarian Śaiva devotee. These two features run through the stories connecting kingship and Citamparam, and they need to be examined in some detail.

In three different stories—those of the Bengal king, the Śrī Laṅka king's daughter, and the Cōl̲a king Kōcceṅkaṇān̲—birth defects were miraculously healed by special powers of Śaiva saints. What these stories indicate is that in each case the devotion of the ruler was the product of personal religious experience. A popular religious tradition based on miraculous experiences of Śivan̲ had developed in the Tamil̲-speaking region quite early. This tradition was later formulated in terms of sixty-three *nāyanmār* or "saints" stories, about people from all walks of life who had had direct and miraculous experiences of Śivan̲. In the case of one of these *nāyanmār* stories, that of Kōcceṅkaṇān̲, the religious experience is described in much the same way, but the story is also linked up with other legendary material from Citamparam so that it becomes the basis for a theory on the links between religion and politics as they are developed between the ritual of the Citamparam temple and the Cōl̲a court.

Earlier Indian theories on the relation of religion and the political order had had a somewhat different basis. Vedic theories had assumed a kind of organically conceived order or *dharma* in which the royal consecration in a *brāhmana* ritual brought together all the elements of a cosmic and social wholeness.[20] The Sanskrit epics of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* had wrestled with the question of the gap between this ideal and the realities of power, but the ideal continued to have currency, and a structural bifurcation between the *brāhmaṇas'* quest for Truth and the *kṣatriyas'* for Power was used to account for the evident fissures in the *dharmic* whole. In actual historical circumstances there were important modifications of this ideal: Chandragupta Maurya's minister, Kauṭilya,[21] proposed a state system based strictly on power; Aśoka[22] defined *dharma* in Buddhist terms as public morality rather than organic wholeness; and the Gupta kings[23] established a kind of state ritual on the basis of a Vaiṣṇavism that borrowed heavily from Aśoka's idea of a public faith. Although the systems of Kauṭilya, Aśoka, and the Guptas no longer took the organic dimension of the Vedic view literally, and acted as if the voices of morality and power were distinguishable, they still held to an organic model and hence saw the king as in some sense embodying the *dharmic* order. The *brāhmaṇa* custodians of the *dharmaśāstra* tradition continued, of course, to insist on the Vedic model and the importance of the rituals they performed for the kings, but the kings' own sense of what religious affiliations they should have depended more on the local religious traditions of their people.

The stories about Cōḻa kingship and Citamparam do not focus on the *dharmaśāstra* model and, in that sense, do not represent the early or "classical" Indian pattern in understanding the interrelation of religion and politics. The stories about the Cōḻas and Citamparam are, rather, early examples of what might be called a "medieval" understanding of the interrelation, which begins with the recognition of the fact that religious experience and kingly power are separate, but asserts that in certain circumstances the two are joined due to a fortuitous event in the history of the lineage. The Kōccenkaṇāṉ story gave form and legitimacy to the Cōḻa family tradition in which the ruler was seen as the chief devotee of Śivaṉ. This view, which involved acknowledging a dependence of the political on the religious, was not always followed by later Cōḻa rulers, as we shall see shortly, but it generally characterized the Cōḻas' approach, and it had a major influence on other rulers in the region, and even on later empires such as those of Vicayanakaram and Orissa.[24]

One feature of the Kōccenkaṇāṉ stories, and of the Cōḻa policy on religious matters, is their partisanship in support of Śaiva temples. Earlier emperors had tended to support all religious communities, but where they were personally identified with one religious tradition it was usually Buddhist, Jaina, or Vaiṣṇava.[25] There are earlier examples of petty rulers lending their support to Śaivism,[26] but Śaiva communities tended to be somewhat esoteric, and before Cōḻa times they had not been thought of as a natural support for imperial ambition. We will shortly be examining the sociological developments that led to the Kāvēri valley region becoming attached to Śaivism, but it is important in the context of understanding the Kōccenkaṇāṉ legends to recognize the way in which they emphasize that the king underwent a religious experience of Śivaṉ just as others in society had. The Cōḻa kings' links with religion were in this sense similar to those of all other devotees in the realm. They were not seen as representatives of the divine in the sense, for instance, that the Mauryan kings were Buddhist *cakravartins*,[27] or the Gupta kings were *amśas* or "parts" of Viṣṇu.[28] The Cōḻa kings were devotees of Śivaṉ as were others in the society of their day. Even when in later eulogistic poems they were compared with Śivaṉ, the comparison had to do with cosmic overlordship and the way they, like Śivaṉ, had brought order and fertility to the realm.[29] Just how different kings interpreted this model of the king as the leading devotee of Śivaṉ we will see when we come to the inscriptional material each ruler left us, but the overall outline of the model is already clear in the political legends preserved in the Citamparam tradition, and in particular in those of the Cōḻas' progenitor, Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ (King Red Eye).

The Peasant Society and the Early Cōḻas

The growth of the irrigation system, which had made the Kāvēri River valley both prosperous and powerful by the ninth century, must have occurred very gradually. There are no evidences that despotic rulers initiated the process as they did in China,[30] or that the great dynastic struggles associated with the rise of the state in the Ganges valley of North India[31] were characteristic of the South. For the most part the development of irrigation seems to have taken place during the early centuries of the common era when the political powers of the region were in Maturai and Kāñcīpuram and the Cōḻa dynasty, which was supposed to control the Kāvēri area, was virtually invisible. In nearby Śrī Laṅka, where irrigation was developed at about the same time, the development was initially limited to the region near the city of Anurādhapura so that one local family could control the surpluses that developed, and with the help of the educated monks in the local Buddhist monastery could develop a centralized state system.[32] In the more scattered Kāvēri River valley of South India the development of irrigation was highly decentralized, and separate families developed different regions of the valley. The regions developed in this way were called *nāṭus* and operated as semiautonomous political units.[33] What tied the *nāṭus* together was the fact that the people who had migrated into the area with the knowledge of irrigation saw it as in their interest to stick together and to intermarry. These self-described *vēḷāḷas* or "plowmen" came to control the economic prosperity and political power that irrigation surpluses brought to the Kāvēri region.

The legendary histories of the Vēḷāḷas describe them as coming from the north and the west, and some scholars have speculated that they might have come from the "Indus Civilization" of Northwest India, which had a highly developed irrigation system but which collapsed due to ecological or political changes (or both) sometime before the beginning of the common era.[34] Wherever they came from, the Vēḷāḷas had by the middle of the first millennium of the common era, when evidences of them become abundant, developed an ecologically sound and decentralized irrigation system, which turned the barren rain-starved area along the banks of the Kāvēri into a fertile rice-producing land. Once it was clear that the area could support a fairly heavy population, other groups came into the area and joined the society as craftsmen (carpenters, blacksmiths, goldsmiths, masons, and potters), priests and musicians, farm laborers, or barbers, washermen, and others who performed menial tasks. Each of these social groups continued to live in its own settlement and maintain its own social and cultural identity, even as they together performed various functions in the economy established under Vēḷāḷa leadership.[35] As prosperity increased the predominantly peasant character of the society was modified to some extent as residential clusters of *brāhmaṇa* scholars and traders sprang up.[36] Although these groups had wider contacts and provided the many small centers with a more sophisticated atmosphere, the society remained decentralized and under Vēḷāḷa domination.

The political system that emerged in the area was based on the *nāṭu* or local region ruled by a council of Vēḷāḷa chieftains.[37] No major cities emerged, as they had in Maturai and Kāñcīpuram, and each *nāṭu* established its own institutions for commerce, politics, and culture. In this arrangement the temple became the central institution; serving as the storehouse through which surplus grains were redistributed, as the institution that provided each group in society with a chance to play a special ritual role consistent with its status in the hierarchy of society, and as the place where priests, poets, musicians, and others could formulate and express the symbols that were to govern the thinking of the society.

The cultural vitality of the system was evident in the seventh and eighth centuries as the hymn-singing saints of both the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava communities traveled around from *nāṭu* to *nāṭu* singing the praises of their deities.[38] Their hymn singing brought into being the two widespread sectarian communities of devotional Hinduism, which during this time came to replace the more localized worship traditions (probably mostly of goddesses), and the Jaina and Buddhist religious practices that had earlier made headway, especially among the traders. The Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava hymn singers made good use of the Vēḷāḷa-led social structure in that they used the *nāṭu* temple as their base of operations, but at the same time picked up on the broader cultural perspective introduced by the *brāhmaṇas* and the traders, and in the end were able to create a sense of social identity within the whole of the Kāvēri valley. This social identity was on the one hand peasant-based and local, while at the same time it was sophisticated enough to set aside the religious challenge of the Jainas and Buddhists and prepare the ground for the political initiatives of the next century when the Cōḻa Empire would take shape.

It is not entirely clear what role the Cōḻa family had in developments within the Kāvēri valley in the centuries prior to 850.[39] In any case, sometime around 850 Vicayālaya, the Cōḻa chieftain of the day, captured Tañcāvūr, which had been held by the Muttaraiyar chiefs who had apparently used the support of the neighboring Pāṇṭyas to defy the traditional rights of the Cōḻas in the region. Vicayālaya immediately set up a temple of Nicumpacūtinī (Durgā), who presumably was the locally worshiped goddess (Sastri 1975, p. 116). It would appear that he shifted from the traditonal Cōḻa base in Uṟaiyūr, thirty miles west, because the imperial rivalry between the Pāṇṭyas and the Pallavas was focused in the Tañcāvūr region. Vicayālaya's son Ātitya I (r. 871-907) established firm Cōḻa control when he sided with the Pallavas in the battle of Śrī Puṟampiyam, where the Pāṇṭyas were decisively defeated, and then turned on his Pallava allies and also sent them out of the Kāvēri valley.

Ātitya's Religious Policy

It was Ātitya who placed Citamparam at the center of cultural activity within the Cōḻa Empire and his initiatives will be examined in detail. The crucial evidence with regard to Ātitya and Citamparam is contained in a family history known as the Anbil Copperplates,[40] which Ātitya's grandson Cuntara Cōḻa had carved. In these plates, Cuntara makes three claims on behalf of his grandfather. First, he conquered the whole Kāvēri valley and Koṅku plateau, marching east to west right up to the Cahyātri mountains on the west coast (in modern day Kerala). Second, he had Śaiva temples in stone built all along the way. Third, he brought back a large quantity of gold, and he and his son Parāntaka had the gold shingled roof placed on the Citamparam temple.

This crucial record gives equal emphasis to Ātitya's military prowess and to his religious interests. The military claim is actually quite far-reaching. The traditional Cōḻa territory extended only a short way west of the capital in Uṟaiyūr and the Cēras ruled over the Koṅku plateau between there and the mountains. We know from inscriptions that Ātitya was able to go so far west because he joined with the Cēra ruler to throw the Pāṇṭyas out of the Koṅku, an area they had presumably seized during their time of glory. Cōḻa dominance was thereby established, for the Cēras remained backed up on the west coast and the Koṅku became Cōḻa territory from the time of Ātitya on. Combined with evidence of his later march into the Pallava territories to the north, these records make clear that Ātitya was an empire builder interested in Cōḻa expansion.

The key features of Ātitya's religious policy are also evident in the Anbil plates. The policy of having temples built up and down the Kāvēri in a sense continued the established policy of having the *nāṭu* councils of the Vēḷāḷas provide temples within their territories. What was new about it was that the policy now got royal support, and that the new temples were all in stone and all Śaiva. Stonemasons were apparently brought into the Kāvēri area from the vanquished regions of the Pallavas, where the rulers had been sponsoring stone temple building for some time,[41] and one presumes that the all-powerful Ātitya would have been able to send the masons to the *nāṭus* of his choice. In addition his support went exclusively to Śaiva temples, thus providing a sharp ideological focus to the new Cōḻa temple-building program.

A second dimension of Ātitya's religious policy is evident in the decision to place the gold shingled roof on Citamparam. In the previous chapter we discussed how this decision arose in relation to the special Cōḻa relationship with Citamparam as told in the story of Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ, but it certainly also had to do with Ātitya's calculations about a proper religious policy for his budding empire. The role of Citamparam in his strategy would seem to be related to the fact that Citamparam was outside of the *nāṭu* system on which he was heavily dependent and over which he wanted some leverage. We are told in an inscription of a later period that

Citamparam was administered as a *taniyūr*,[42] something like a capital area directly under the court administration. Whether this status arose because of earlier connections with the Kaḷabhras, because of the absence of a *nāṭu* council in this remote area, or because Ātitya wanted to give a special status to the place is not clear. In any case by putting a gold roof on this temple with no *nāṭu* connections, and with traditions associating it with legendary figures from all over India, Ātitya was able to establish a cultural center for his realm which lent credence to the larger ambitions of his imperialistic designs.

The way in which the two types of temples, the local or *nāṭu* temples and the Citamparam temple, fit into Ātitya's overall religious policy becomes clear when we examine the work of Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi whom Ātitya ordered to edit and publish a book of Śaiva hymns and a book of Śaiva saints' lives. Nampi's life story was told in the *Tirumuṟai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam* by Umāpati in the fourteenth century.[43] In its simplest form the story is that Nampi was a village boy from Tirunāraiyūr, fairly near Citamparam, who miraculously learned the Tamiḻ of the earlier hymn singers with the help of the god Vināyakaṉ. The king asked Nampi to go with him to collect the hymns of the three hymn singers Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar from the priests in Citamparam, so that they might be edited and set to music. Nampi was also to rewrite the collection of the life stories of the sixty-three *nāyanmār* saints started by Cuntarar, and make it available to the public as well. (It was he who first set out the full story of Kōccenkaṇāṉ in which the relations between the political and the religious were defined, as we have already seen.)

Ātitya's intention in ordering Nampi to take up the related tasks of editing the hymns and the life stories of the saints was clearly to create a popular religious tradition. These hymns and life stories had already become popular, but with the work of Nampi they were tied more closely to a uniform Śaiva tradition and associated more directly with temple worship and with Citamparam in particular. The royal plan was clearly ambitious.

This ambitious plan seems to have run into an immediate roadblock when Nampi and the emperor approached the priests in Citamparam for old collections of the hymns. We might presume that the priests had some hesitation about this request, for we are told they refused to give up the manuscripts until the god Vināyakaṉ pointed to the room where they were locked up and the images of the hymn singers themselves were brought and they gave their consent that the room be opened and the ant-eaten copies of the hymns be produced. This story seems to indicate that the priests had doubts about the popular tradition being introduced by the king through Nampi.

Exactly why the Citamparam priests were reluctant about cooperating with the king and Nampi we do not know, but there would seem to be two possible reasons. The more obvious one would be that the priests were particular about the Vedic ritual forms they used, and still claim to use today, and they did not want those rituals minimized by the introduction of a popular cult. The other possibility arises if we accept the traditional dating for Māṇikkavācakar. We might then surmise that the priests were already deeply involved in the ritual use of Māṇikkavācakar's hymns (a tradition that continues to play a major role in the temple today, and will be fully described in Story 6), and they felt some reluctance to see what was at that point a different tradition of Śaiva hymnody introduced into temple practice. (The two traditions of hymnody would later be blended into one when the *Tiruppatiyam* or *Tēvāram* of the three itinerant hymn singers Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar was joined with Māṇikkavācakar's hymns and other hymns to make up the official canon of Śaiva Siddhānta known as the *Tirumuṟai*.) Whatever the cause of the priests' reluctance, the king's will prevailed, and the hymns were published and immediately became the focus of a popular religious tradition.

While Nampi is now remembered for his having edited the *Tēvāram* hymns, his publishing of the life stories of the sixty-three *nāyanmār* saints was probably also important in the development of the devotional tradition of medieval Tamiḻ Śaivism. The Jainas, who were the main rivals of the Śaivas, had a book of sixty-three religious fables, and in the situation of text rivalry, which characterized the period, the Śaiva ability to produce a devotional book of sixty-three stories was important. The stories themselves must have already been in circulation, but Nampi's retelling of the stories made them part of the officially supported peasant tradition. With the priests of Citamparam, the Mūvāyiravar or the "Three Thousand," first on the list (legend says the phrase *tillai vāl antaṇar*, "the sages who live in Tillai," was suggested to Cuntarar as his first line by the deity himself when Cuntarar hesitated before beginning his earlier listing of the saints), the primacy of Citamparam in the overall religious model of the empire was underlined, and the once esoteric and remote religious center was drawn into the heart of the popular tradition.

Nampi's works provided a specific focus for the cultural development of the Cōḻa domain over the next few centuries. In this sense they functioned as the "texts" of a "textual community," very much in the sense of the European medieval situation, which has been so ably described by Brian Stock (1983).[44] For the most part the society remained illiterate, but the presence of a Tamiḻ literary movement providing texts and cultural leadership in society was strongly supported by the Cōḻa rulers. In some way these Tamiḻ text-makers were provoked into action by the examples of their Jaina rivals and by the presence of *brāhmaṇa* communities with their traditions of Sanskrit esoteric texts. They had, however, their own traditions of itinerant bards and poets to draw on as well,[45] and it was only necessary to modify the format of the text to make these oral traditions the basis of a new and very popular literary religious movement. Citamparam was a somewhat reluctant participant in this new movement, but it became more and more the place with which texts in the Śaiva tradition had to be associated in order to establish their authority. By linking the nonliterate peasant traditions of the *nāṭu* temples with the more literate traditions of Citamparam, Ātitya was able to provide a unified cultural base for his empire.

The initiatives taken up by Ātitya in both the political and the religious realms were ably extended by his son Parāntaka I (r. 907–955). Parāntaka's conquests included the whole of South India and began to extend to the north. His support of Citamparam was such that, as mentioned earlier, most of the later Cōḻa family histories tended to give him, rather than Ātitya, credit for the gold roof on the temple. By the end of his long reign, however, Parāntaka was extending himself beyond his means, and in 949 he suffered a tragic defeat at the hands of the Rāṣṭrakūṭas at Takkōlam, in which the crown prince Rājātitya was killed and the whole dynastic history of the Cōḻas was thrown into disarray. That complex dynastic story is best told as a prelude to the Middle Cōḻa rule, which ushered in a very different policy with regard to Citamparam.

The Middle Cōḻas and the Royal Temple Experiment

The situation that developed after the Cōḻa defeat at Takkōlam in 949 involved a whole generation of political chaos and the emergence of a new political structure and a new relationship between religion and the state. The political chaos resulted from the fact that not only was the crown prince killed at Takkōlam, but his younger brother, Kaṇṭarātitya, also could not take up the mantle, because he either became an ascetic or died young of a broken spirit. The third brother, Āriñcaya, came to the throne briefly, as did Kaṇṭarātitya's son Uttama, but neither proved effective rulers, and it was not until Āriñcaya's grandson, Rājarāja I, was old enough to ascend the throne in 985 that the empire regained its balance.

During this period of political chaos a major shift in the religious inclinations of the Cōḻa family was also taking place led by the pious and maternal figure of Cempiyan Mahātēvi.[46] Cempiyan Mahātēvi was the young wife of the distraught Kaṇṭarātitya when he disappeared from the scene soon after his brother was killed at Takkōlam. Joining with her grieving father-in-law, Parāntaka, in a kind of funereal cult they built funereal temples (*paḷḷipaṭai*) to Rājātitya and to Kaṇṭarātitya.[47] Establishing a reputation for temple building, Cempiyan Mahātēvi came to dominate the work of the stonemasons in the area over the next half century, as she had temples built for relatives and friends and developed what came to be thought of as the "Cempiyan" style. In the role of favorite aunt, Cempiyan continued to have great influence through much of the reign of Rājarāja I. In spite of her great interest in temples, and the fact that her temples included sculptures of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ on the south side of the entranceway, there is no record that Cempiyan ever visited Citamparam or made a donation there. This fact alone would indicate a shift in the religious inclinations of the Cōḻa family from the time of the Early Cōḻas, but fuller indication of the nature of the shift becomes clear when we examine the religious policy of Rājarāja I.

Rājarāja I (r. 985–1014) proved an immediate success as a military leader. He rebuilt the empire in South India and went on to conquer Śrī Laṅka and to get involved in Indonesia and Cambodia as well. The religious policy he adopted was quite different from that of Ātitya and Parāntaka in that he built the grand royal temple of Tañcāvūr almost as an extension of his royal palace, and ran it as a personal monument and an expression of imperial grandeur.[48] He may have even expected it to serve as some kind of a *paḷḷipaṭai* or memorial shrine to himself,[49] but it is not necessary to insist on that interpretation in order to show that he had adopted in some form the ideas developed by Cempiyan that religion could be a ritualized glorification of the royal line. He was not free, of course, to set aside altogether the two pillars of the religious policy of the early Cōḻas, which involved a focus on Citamparam and the sponsorship of the hymn-singing tradition. While the central worship object of the new temple in Tañcāvūr was a gigantic (*bṛhat*) *liṅkam*, a second worship hall was reserved for the Dancing Image of Śivan̲, and, in a most unusual arrangement, a sculptured panel of the Citamparam shrine was placed on the wall outside this worship hall. In similar ways provision was made for the recitation of the *Tēvāram* hymns, even though the main focus of worship came to be the Sanskritic rituals of the priests in the *liṅkam* shrine.

Indirect confirmation of the fact that Rājarāja's royal temple cult was understood as a kind of personal monument comes from the fact that his son Rājēndra I (r. 1012–44), who was himself a great conqueror, felt obliged to move the capital and build his own royal temple monument in a place called Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōl̲apuram, about fifty miles from Citamparam. Inscriptions do not provide a complete guide to this period due to the rebuilding of the walls in Citamparam, which took place a century later, but in the record we have there is no evidence that either Rājarāja or Rājēndra used Citamparam as a focus of his religious activity.[50]

Just why these two great rulers adopted the policy of the royal temple, and why their successors just as decisively abandoned it, we do not know with any precision. They might have been influenced by North Indian priests who wanted them to try to revive earlier traditions of a *dharma* ruler in some form; they might have been influenced by their contemporaries in Cambodia who were experimenting with ideas of divine kingship;[51] or they might have been influenced primarily by Cempiyan Mahātēvi's idea of a ritualized memorialization of the Cōl̲a line. Whatever their motivation, the experiment was not successful, both because it did not prove popular with the people, who already had a vibrant and popular religious tradition built around the loyalty to the *nāṭu* or regional temple and the ritual of hymn singing, and because it violated to some extent both the Sanskritic tradition of the separation of the realms of *brahman* (truth) and *kṣatṛa* (power), and the more recent practice of differentiation between politics and religion which the period of the Early Cōl̲as had developed. Whatever the reasons for either the rise or the abandonment of this idea of "royal temple," it was quickly and decisively put aside when the empire went into another period of chaos trying to find a successor to Rājēndra. The mantle was eventually taken up by the neighboring Cāḷukya ruler, Kulōttuṅka I, whose mother happened to be a Cōl̲a princess and who was therefore brought in to start up what amounted to a new branch of the Cōl̲a line. Kulōttuṅka decisively returned the focus of Cōl̲a religious policy to the traditional center in Citamparam.

Citamparam as the Culture Center of the Later Cōl̲as

In spite of a generation of chaos that preceded his reign, Kulōttuṅka I (r. 1070–1120) took over a great empire in 1070 and ruled it with efficiency for almost fifty years. There are fewer stories about his personal piety than there are for most of the Cōl̲as, but there are thousands of inscriptions during his time on both Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava temples throughout the realm, which reveal how he used temples to bring about the redistribution of poorly utilized land and generally set in place an effective administrative system.[52]

There were two initiatives he took with respect to Citamparam that allowed it to regain its earlier role as the mysterious sacred center of the empire's religious life. The first initiative is that he decided to place a sacred stone sent to him by the god-king of Cambodia, with whom he was in alliance, in the Etirampalam of Citamparam where it could be seen by the Naṭarājan̲ image as it looked out the door of the central shrine (cf. Story 3). One can imagine this act either being of great symbolic significance or a rather routine donation depending on the political atmosphere, but however much was made of it at the time it certainly indicated that Citamparam again enjoyed primacy in the court's religious policy.

The second initiative regarding Citamparam, which was at least indirectly associated with Kulōttuṅka, was the massive rebuilding program undertaken during his reign in the name of his retired general Nāralōkavīran̲ (cf. Story 3). As we have already seen in the preceding chapter, this building program was the most important in the history of the temple complex, and it included the construction of the major stone walls and towers of the temple, as well as most of the goddess temple, and the stairs of the temple tank. With such an extensive rebuilding going on it is important to note that the little wooden central shrine (Cir̲r̲ampalam) was not rebuilt, nor were the thatch-style roofs of the Etirampalam and Pērampalam altered, even though all these earlier buildings fit rather awkwardly with the new eleventh- or twelfth-century style that now came to characterize the temple complex as a whole. Clearly the "donors," who in this case would presumably be Kulōttuṅka and others working through the retired general Nāralōkavīran̲, were either unwilling or unable to make drastic changes in the religious traditions represented by the earlier buildings. This conservatism in renovation, along with other evidences, would seem to indicate that the dominance of the political over the religious, which we saw in the policy of Rājarāja and Rājēndra, was again no longer the Cōl̲a policy. Whether Kulōttuṅka was making the separation of the religious realm even more explicit by having the rebuilding done in the name of his general rather than his own name it would be hard to say. Certainly he was not uninterested in religious matters or in perceiving his role in religious terms. In the *piracacti* (Sanskrit: *praśasti*) or "statement of praise," which all inscriptions of his reign were required to carry, his overlordship is explicitly compared with that of Śivan̲:

> Having made his wheel of authority go as far as the golden circle [Mount Meru, the cosmological center of the earth], the golden circle was surrounded by his fame, even as it is surrounded by the moat of the sea. The king, while newly wed and still only heir apparent, won the brilliant goddess of victory at Śakharakōṭṭam by his valorous deeds, and seized a strong herd of elephants at Vayirakaram. He unsheathed his sword, showed the strength of his arm, and spurred on his warhorse so that the king of Kaṇṭaḷa, whose spear had a sharp point, lost his wealth. Having thus established his fame; having put on as a garland the Northern Region [probably meaning the Cāḷukya territory in which he had been born]; having stopped the prostitution of the goddess with the sweet and excellent lotus flower [Lakṣmī] in the Southern Region [possibly the Pāṇṭya kingdom]; and having stopped the loneliness of the goddess of the good country whose garment is the Pon̲n̲i [Kāvēri] River [the traditional Cōl̲a kingdom]; he then put on by right the pure royal crown of jewels, while the other kings of the earth put his feet on their heads as one large crown.
>
> [As a result of his reign] the sweet river Pon̲n̲i swelled, and the river of the sins of the Kali Yuga dried up. His scepter swayed over every region; the heavenly

> white light of his parasol shown everywhere on the earth; and his tiger banner [the Cōḻa emblem] fluttered unrivaled on Mount Meru. Before him stood a row of elephants showering jewels, which had been presented to him as tribute by the kings of the remote islands of the deep sea; while beside him lay the head of the Pāṇṭya king being pecked by kites.
>
> He was thus pleased to take his seat on the throne of heroes for a lifetime, along with the mistress of the whole earth, while his valor and liberality shone like the necklace he acquired in warfare, and like the flower garland on his royal shoulders. While all men on earth worshiped him, the mistress of the whole earth, Tyākavallī, was present along with him, as Umā is with Śivaṉ. So also was the mistress of the seven worlds, Eḻiśai-Vallapī (may she prosper, that ornament of womanhood), who was also joyfully seated beside him, even as Kaṅkā too takes her seat with Śivaṉ [as his second wife]. (*South Indian Inscriptions,* vol. 3)

In addition to royal initiatives in rebuilding the temple in Citamparam, Kulōttuṅka's reign also saw the development of a pattern of donation for the upkeep of the temple, which was to continue in much the same form through the remainder of the Cōḻa period. Many of these donations involve the giving of land for the purpose of providing a daily supply of flowers or other ritual essentials (such as rice and oil) for the temple. One interesting example was a cash donation of eighty *kācu* supplied by Kōṉ Rājātirājaṉ, also known as Rājēndracōḻa-Anantapālaṉ of Iḷankārikuṭi in Pērāvūr-nāṭu, who from his name can be clearly identified as a petty ruler from another region within the Cōḻa domain (*ARE* 1958–59, 317). Ten *kācu* of this amount was used to purchase land from the *nakarattār* or business caste committee. This land was used to develop a flower garden for the temple and to provide grain, which would be used to feed the devotees residing in the Tillaivāḷaṇṭaṉ *maṭam*. (This is one of the earliest references to a *maṭam*, institutions that were later understood to be both places for prayer and meditation and public feeding halls.) The other seventy *kācu* were invested to provide a regular annual yield of thirty *kācu* (a 43 percent interest rate!), with one-quarter of a *dramma* per *kācu* per month being set aside to pay the taxes.

There were probably benefits in prestige and tax evasion to the donors, recipients, and middlemen who became involved in these complex banking arrangements, even though their central purpose was an expression of devotion. In this case virtually all members of society were probably involved in that the ruling caste initiated the exchange, the priestly *brāhmaṇas* were the immediate beneficiaries, the business caste provided the land and no doubt managed the investment, and the *maṭam*, which in this area was usually managed by the Vēḷāḷa peasant community and served some of the needs of the lower castes, was one of its indirect beneficiaries.

Vikrama (r. 1118–35) and Kulōttuṅka II (r. 1133–50), who in turn followed Kulōttuṅka I on the Cōḻa throne and generally continued his religious policy, seem to have become virtually full-time devotees at Citamparam even to the neglect of their military and administrative duties. In the verse of praise (*piracacti*) included in all inscriptions of a reign, the usual practice was to mention military exploits, but Vikrama took a different approach and listed his donations to Citamparam.

> In the tenth year [of the reign] the gold brought by the conquered kings was made into an emblem studded with gems and engraved with the words: MAY THE KING

> LIVE LONG AND PROTECT THE EARTH. At the same time the walls, towers, and other buildings around the golden central shrine, where the family deity of the Cōḻas does the *tāṇḍava* dance, were covered with gold. The gold on the altar for offerings shone until it seemed to reflect the sun. The temple chariot was also covered with gold and strings of pearls, so that the people were delighted as they pulled the chariot on festival days. The king also had a street of priestly houses covered with jewels constructed, and that street was named after him. Having made these many gifts, he covered the whole earth with his umbrella [when he visited the temple] on the thirteenth *tithi* of the waxing moon on the Sunday of Hasta in the month of Cittirai in the tenth year of his reign. (*South India Inscriptions,* vol. 3.)

Vikrama's association with Citamparam seems to have begun in 1118, the same year in which he was crowned (but the tenth year in which he served as coruler), when his father asked him to attend the rededication of the temple after the completion of the rebuilding program led by Nāralōkavīraṉ. He apparently continued to be personally involved in arranging for the provisions needed in the ritual. He even started the practice of having some donations to distant temples recorded both on that temple's wall as well as the Citamparam temple wall, probably thereby making the managing committee of Citamparam something like a central authority in the management of some of the smaller temples (*ARE* 1958–59, 314; *ARE* 1913, 309). He diverted court income to the temple when he arranged for the village of Alaṅkuti to be freed from paying royal revenue (*kaṭamai*), provided they supply rice to the temple in Citamparam (*ARE* 1894, 165). After 1128 he often issued orders from Citamparam, where apparently he had established a palace and resided much of the time.

In the case of Kulōttuṅka II there can be little doubt that he was crowned in Citamparam and spent much of his peaceful reign there, basing his reign in the audience hall he or his father had constructed, which is now called either the Thousand Pillared Hall or the Rāja Sabhā. Inscriptions from elsewhere refer to his work in Citamparam, and his court poet makes clear that he considered his service to Citamparam the central accomplishment of his reign (*Kulōttuṅka Cōḻa Ulā*). As was noted earlier in Story 3, however, he must have had some reticence about having inscriptions put on the walls in Citamparam for there are none during his reasonably long reign of seventeen years. Much has been made of the fact that his court poet describes how he had the image of Viṣṇu removed from the temple area—presumably the image worshiped by the Vaiṣṇava saints Tirumaṅkai and Kulacēkara in the seventh and eighth centuries. Later Vaiṣṇava writers made him out to be a bigoted villain on the basis of this story, and even suggested that he was the ruler who persecuted Rāmānuja, the great Vaiṣṇava theologian of Śrīraṅkam, and forced Rāmānuja to flee to Karnātaka.[53] There is little contemporary evidence to support this image of Kulōttuṅka II as a persecutor of Vaiṣṇavas, but the story about the persecution fed the flames of sectarian rivalry very nicely in the Vicayanakaram period three centuries later when Vaiṣṇava writers sought to paint all the Cōḻa kings as Śaiva partisans in order to win compensating support from the Vicayanakaram rulers.

In some ways the most important initiative of Kulōttuṅka II's reign was his decision to invite the great poet Cēkkiḻār to sit in the Thousand Pillared Hall and compose the *Periya Purāṇa* (see Stories 1 and 3). Although this work is only a literary embellishment of earlier hagiographies of Śaiva saints composed by Cuntarar and Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi respectively, it came to be seen as the epitome of the high standards of Cōḻa culture, since its literary style is of the highest order and, in it, the Śaiva tradition was able to integrate fully its folk hagiographies with courtly art. This work, composed on the temple premises of Citamparam, came to be a symbol of the blending of religion and high culture characteristic of the Later Cōḻa period. Few kings identify themselves with a temple to the extent that that identification becomes their single claim to fame, but Kulōttuṅka II did, and his inscriptions aptly conclude that he was the "king who wore the crown in such wise as to add luster to Tillainakar" (the traditional name of Citamparam) (*South Indian Inscriptions,* vol. 3).

Rājarāja II (r. 1146–73) and Rājādhirāja II (r. 1163–79) were relatively weak rulers who apparently continued the tradition of royal association with Citamparam, but who left few inscriptions on the temple walls. Kulōttuṅka III (r. 1178–1216) was a much stronger ruler who took up the task of settling the dynastic succession in the subservient Pāṇṭya Empire to the south, and in the process defeated the Śrī Laṅka armies, which backed the opposite side. There is little mention of his devotion to the Citamparam deity, but his new policy of requiring all donations to be recorded in formal legal language with permission of the court led to a flood of carefully worded inscriptions being placed on the walls of many temples including those of Citamparam. The following example will give an idea of the different parties involved in this kind of formal transaction. The *piracacti*, which precedes the business part of the inscription, will also provide an example of the more military image Kulōttuṅka III wanted to be remembered for:

> Hail! Prosperity! The king put on the crown that he might protect the earth unto the end of time. Since then clouds have been abundant and the fertility of the soil has increased; conduct as prescribed in the Four Vedas has prospered; the goddesses of Good Fortune and Victory have been his ever present wives; his umbrella of sovereignty has shone like the moon; kings have bowed at his feet; the goddess Earth has rejoiced; the laws of Manu have been enforced; and his scepter and discus have ruled everywhere.
>
> At the request of his ally, Vikrama Pāṇṭya, the son of Vīra Pāṇṭya, Eḻakam, and the Maṟas were subdued, and the Śrī Laṅka soldiers had their noses cut off and were chased into the sea. He took the city of Maturai from Vīra Pāṇṭya and returned it to his ally Vikrama Pāṇṭya.
>
> Known by the Cōḻa title Parakēsarivarmaṉ [rather than "Rājakēsarivarman," which was used in alternate reigns] or as Śrī Kulōttuṅka Cōḻatēva "who was pleased to take Maturai," the king issued the following order in the ninth year of his reign on the eighty-eighth day:
>
> In order to establish a flower garden to supply garlands for the image and in order to provide a tax-free income for the two attendants of the garden, Keralarājaṉ, alias (. . .), of (. . .), purchased the land from several persons and registered it in the name of (. . .).
>
> In the village of (. . .) one-twentieth of a *vēli* of dry land in the second square of the first *kannaru* to the west of the road (. . .) and south of the irrigation channel (. . .). In the village of (. . .) near the hamlet called (. . .) one half *vēli*, 3/20, 3/80,

1/160, and 1/320 of "classified" land in the first square of the fourth *kannaru* west of the road (. . .) and south of the channel (. . .).

This land should be added to the other plots of temple land in these villages. This order should be engraved in stone in the temple. The attendants at this flower garden should be exempt from the regular communal duties of gardeners.

Keralarājan͟ has asked that this purchase and donation be sanctioned and I, the king, hereby order it and authorize the officer to enter it in the register book.

The gardeners will supply to the temple one *kuruṇi* and four *nāli* of garlands each per day.

This is written by the royal secretary (. . .) and is signed by V . . . , N . . . , P . . . , K . . . , N . . . , R . . . , and V . . . (*ARE* 1902, 457, and *South Indian Inscriptions*, vol. 3, no. 86)

The Pallava and Pāṇṭya Initiatives: 1220–1310

In spite of the vigor of Kulōttuṅka III's reign, the long range decline in Cōl͟a power continued. Rājarāja III (r. 1216–46) was the emperor who allowed the Cōl͟a domain to be encroached upon from inside and out. Trying to buy peace, he formed a marriage alliance with the increasingly powerful Hoysaḷa Empire to his northwest. They used the opportunity to establish what they called a "southern" capital at Camayapuram, just beside Śrīraṅkam island and the crucial first fork in the Kāvēri River delta. In that area they took over cultural as well as political leadership and were very active in building *maṭams* and renovating temples.[54] The area to the east, or the northern half of the lower delta, was controlled by a local ruler named Kōpperuñciṅkan͟ who claimed to be of the old Pallava lineage (although the Pallava Empire based in Kāñcīpuram had been in eclipse for over two hundred years). His capital was very near Citamparam and he virtually took over management of the Citamparam temple during the middle decades of the thirteenth century.[55] The more important threat to Cōl͟a sovereignty, however, came from the Pāṇṭyas to the south who underwent a great surge of renewed power after Kulōttuṅka III had helped to settle their succession problem a generation earlier. About 1216, at the beginning of Rājarāja III's reign, Vīra Pāṇṭya briefly marched north with the express purpose of worshiping in Citamparam, but he never made it that far. By midcentury, however, Cuntara Pāṇṭya made a dramatic lightning conquest of the whole area and took numerous initiatives at Citamparam.[56] We will examine the religious policies of Kōpperuñciṅkan͟ Pallava and Cuntara Pāṇṭya respectively with some care.

The work of Kōpperuñciṅkan͟ in Citamparam is complex and extensive. He or his minister Cōlakōn͟, who was apparently directly responsible for temple affairs, left over sixty inscriptions on the walls of Citamparam. These inscriptions of Kōpperuñciṅkan͟ and Cōlakōn͟ did not just use the name of Kōpperuñciṅkan͟ as the ruler of the day (in fact routine inscriptions still normally dated themselves in relation to the reigns of the Cōl͟a ruler Rājarāja III, or later Rājēndra III,) but took the form of direct orders from the ruler concerning the management of the temple.[57] In the preceding chapter, we have already discussed his role in altering the buildings, for it was he who built the Kāḷi temple and probably the *liṅkam* temple, had the southern gateway rebuilt, and probably had the eastern gateway moved and rebuilt. As noted earlier, these alterations had the effect of bringing the temple tradition more into line with orthodox Śaiva practice in North India from where pilgrims were streaming to Citamparam in great numbers at this time. We will look at some of the theological implications of this move to Śaiva orthodoxy in a later chapter, but what is interesting to note here is that the shift had such strong support from an apparently local ruler. Perhaps the "Pallava" connection, which Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ was so proud of, was not as artificial as historians have tended to believe, for the North Indian and orthodox Sanskritic connections so central to the cultural policy of the Pallava Empire in its earlier phase[58] seem to be continued here in spite of the fact that the Pallava family had for centuries in between been reduced to feudatory status.

From the point of view of the later Śaiva community in South India, the differences between one kind of royal support and another (or one kind of hymn and another, or one kind of temple practice and another) were blurred in an effort to create a sense of continuous tradition. As historians, however, we can see that there were significant differences, for instance, in the way royal support was tendered. The Cōḻas, as we have seen, came to power encouraging the popular peasant practices of reciting hagiographies of people who had miraculously experienced Śivaṉ, and singing hymns addressed to the local temples of Śivaṉ. Priests in larger temples, and particularly those of Citamparam, were not at first happy to see the court focusing on this peasant form of religion, but when it became clear that courtly support gave hagiography reading and hymn singing a formal place in temple worship, some meeting of minds was achieved. The earlier Pallava tradition had seen more direct links between state and temple. The Pallavas had at first been inclined to support Jainism, but had sponsored centers of learning for Buddhists, Śaivas, and Vaiṣṇavas as well. When Mahendravarmaṉ was converted to Śaivism, he built a major temple in his name and employed orthodox Sanskritic priests in it. This was to become a general pattern among Pallavas. Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ's twofold policy of directly interfering in temple affairs at a management level, and of forcing an orthodox Sanskritic tradition on the Citamparam temple, would seem in this sense to be in the typical Pallava style.

The Pāṇṭya intervention in Citamparam represents a third pattern of relations between religion and the state, different from both that of the Cōḻas and that of the Pallavas. The Pāṇṭya pattern is rooted in the tradition of the Mīṉāṭci (Sanskrit: Mīnākṣī) temple in Maturai, which developed on the basis of a strong local tradition of goddess worship with only a touch of Śaiva myth and orthodox practice gradually added to the local, core tradition.[59] The Pāṇṭya kings were not depicted as "devotees" as were the Cōḻas, or as temple "administrators" as were the Pallavas, but as mythic heroes themselves. Mīṉāṭci was portrayed as having once been a Pāṇṭya princess. Even as late as the thirteenth century, Cuntara Pāṇṭya was able to portray his visit to Citamparam in mythic terms and to play a central role in the ritual pattern of the Citamparam temple, a role that no Cōḻa or Pallava ruler had taken up in spite of the rulers' close connections with the place. Cuntara Pāṇṭya had himself given *apiṭēkams* or ritual baths like those given the image of the deity, rituals known as *vīra apiṭēkam* or hero bath and *vicaya apiṭēkam* or victor bath (*ARE* 1914, 192, 370; *ARE* 1929–30, 616). In addition Cuntara Pāṇṭya had himself weighed against gold and had the gold donated to the temple (*ARE* 1892, 182;*ARE* 1913, 338, 363;

ARE 1962–63, 569)—a popular practice among later rulers, but not common among either the Cōḻas or the Pallavas.

Why did Cuntara Pāṇṭya make a ritual trip to Citamparam so soon after the first Pāṇṭya expansion into Cōḻa territory? Partly, of course, it may have been to capture the cultural centers of the Cōḻas as he had the political centers. In addition there may have been a lingering connection between the Pāṇṭya family and Citamparam, for Citamparam may have once been the capital of their bitter rivals, the Kaḷabhras, and it was certainly the place where the illustrious Pāṇṭya minister, Māṇikkavācakar, had gone to convert the Śrī Laṅka king, and where he eventually settled as a mystic sage. Political events moved rapidly in the mid-thirteenth century, and the Pāṇṭyas found it impossible to hold the Citamparam area for long, but they were able to create some kind of mythic solidarity between the political and the religious at Citamparam and left an important mark on the place. In addition to their different ritual activities they built a temple to their favorite deity, Murukaṉ, participated in some degree in the renovations initiated by Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ, and left a host of hastily carved inscriptions on the walls.

While in a political sense the Pāṇṭya intervention in Citamparam did not last long, the long range impact on Śaiva tradition was considerable. The rewriting of the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇa*, the legendary history of Maturai, which was undertaken at this moment of Pāṇṭya splendor, presents us with a complete story of Śaiva tradition as seen through Pāṇṭya eyes.[60] Citamparam, while in Cōḻa territory and somehow, perhaps reluctantly, related to the three itinerant hymn singers Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar and the sixty-three ''saints'' of the peasant traditions in the Cōḻa region, was in the Pāṇṭya perspective equally close to the tradition of Māṇikkavācakar and the ''sports'' of Śivaṉ in Maturai. In the centuries to follow, Citamparam would be the center that would unite these two Śaiva traditions into one, but in the mid-thirteenth century it was the lightning quick intervention of the Pāṇṭya rulers in the life of Citamparam that forced Citamparam to take seriously once again the Pāṇṭya version of Śaiva tradition.

In the final analysis the age of imperial rivalry in the mid-thirteenth century led to a rise in priestly power in the Citamparam temple. With three different political voices echoing off the temple walls at once, the priests found an opportunity to consolidate their hold on the temple and not only do the daily ritual but renew their management of temple affairs as well.[61] Exactly what the priests thought the role of political power ought to be in the life of a temple is set down in the Guidebooks for Sanskrit and Tamiḻ visitors respectively, which the priests prepared during this period. The content of those guidebooks will be examined in the next chapter, but it is important to note here that while the Age of Imperial Rivalry saw more political interference in the life of the temple than any other, it was a chaotic form of interference and, in fact, led to a rise in priestly rather than political control.

The Decline of Political Involvement: 1400–1700

In South India generally the Vicayanakaram period (1400–1700) represents a time of vigorous government intervention in the life of the temples, but Citamparam was not one of the temples the Vicayanakaram rulers used to further their ends. The only example of Vicayanakaram intervention in Citamparam was the dramatic edict of 1539 ordering that the Gōvintarājaṉ temple of Viṣṇu be set up right in the inner courtyard facing east, just at the south-facing entrance of the Naṭarājaṉ temple (see Story 3). Except for this one important action, the Vicayanakaram rulers seemed to take little interest in Citamparam, and clearly did not see it in the central political role it had held throughout Cōḻa times. Why did its role undergo such a dramatic alteration?

One important reason probably had to do with strategic location. Some historians have felt that the Muslim armies that marched through South India early in the fourteenth century made a detour to desecrate the Citamparam temple,[62] but that is almost certainly based on a misidentification of place-names in Muslim histories. The route the Muslim armies took roughly corresponds to the present-day national highway from Kāñcīpuram to Śrīraṅkam and on to Maturai. The Śrīraṅkam temple definitely was desecrated only to be dramatically reopened and reorganized sixty years later and to go on to become one of the major centers used by the Vicayanakaram rulers in directing the culture of the Kāvēri basin region.[63] The flow of military activity and of cultural links to the Vicayanakaram court to the Northwest was thus further to the west in the Kāvēri basin than it had been traditionally. The important temples of this period were Tirupati at the northern edge of the old Tamiḻ region, Tiruvaṇṇāmalai on the main route directly south of Kāñcīpuram, Śrīraṅkam at the point where the main route crosses the Kāvēri, and, later in the period, Maturai when the regional governor or *nāyakkar* of that far outpost rebuilt the traditional worship center of Mīṉāṭci. Citamparam was not in that strategic pattern, and a century of decline and another of anarchy had left the Cōḻa name and the Cōḻa links with Citamparam a dead political tradition by the time the Vicayanakaram kings set up a political system with totally new geographical orientations.

In addition to location, the other factor in the eclipse of Citamparam's political influence was the shift from Śaiva to Vaiṣṇava temples as the primary vehicles of state-sponsored cultural activity. It is true that Cōḻas sponsored Vaiṣṇava as well as Śaiva temples, and it is also true that the Vicayanakaram rulers were closely linked with the Vedānta *maṭams,* which are generally classed as Śaiva, and that they did make donations to Śaiva temples. Nevertheless there was a major shift in roles, and the many Śaiva temples deeply rooted in local peasant tradition at the *nāṭu* level pretty well had to fend for themselves during the Vicayanakaram period. The two great Vaiṣṇava temples of Tirupati and Śrīraṅkam clearly underwent major resurgences and had practically full-time political representatives in the Vicayanakaram court.[64] The *Kōyil Oḻuku* or *Temple Chronicle* of Śrīraṅkam indicates how, for instance, these clerical ambassadors were able to get the Vicayanakaram court to settle once and for all an old boundary dispute Śrīraṅkam had with the nearby Śaiva temple of Tiruvāṉaikkā (pp. 139ff.)

In this new situation the focus of Śaiva reorganization was actually away from the political. Landlords in the traditional delta area of the Kāvēri found it expedient to place some of their own landholdings, as well as those they managed on behalf of temples, in the hands of a network of *maṭams* headed up and managed by Vēḷāḷas or members of the landlords' own *jāti* or caste.[65] These *maṭams* were associated with the theological movement known as Śaiva Siddhānta, which we will examine in a later chapter, but what is interesting for us here is that these *maṭams* became major landholders, and through that means de facto managers of a large number of temples. Exactly what the tax advantages and other political advantages were of handling the land wealth in this way is not clear, but in some sense it represents a concentration of Śaiva wealth in an apolitical institution, even as the Vicayanakaram court was sponsoring the concentration of other wealth and power in the two great Vaiṣṇava temples of Tirupati and Śrīraṅkam.

Citamparam was not drawn directly into the Śaiva *maṭam* tradition, but it was to receive regular endowments or *kaṭṭalais* from the *maṭams*.[66] Presumably its status with landlords and businessmen throughout the traditional Cōḻa areas was sufficiently great that it was able to remain reasonably independent throughout this period, even though virtually no new construction was undertaken except that connected with the introduction of the Gōvinṭarājaṉ shrine. In terms of theological as distinct from political status, this was a period of great activity in Citamparam, and one presumes that its removal from the political realm allowed priests and theologians all the more scope to center the activity of the temple on their work.

The Priesthood Becomes Wary of All Benefactors: 1700 to the Present

In South India the modern era begins with the Carnatic Wars of the eighteenth century in which the British and French along with their respective Indian allies chased back and forth across the countryside for decades attempting to set up the decisive battle with one another. During the course of these wars, most of the great temples were used at one time or another as forts, and there was considerable disruption to life in the area. The Citamparam temple was almost certainly one of those occupied from time to time.

It is difficult to know whether during such interruptions worship routines were carried on quietly in the inner corridors or whether worship was suspended altogether. The manuscript, briefly discussed in Story 1, that was picked up by the British officer, Colonel MacKenzie, gives us a pretty good idea of what was going on in the temple at Citamparam. The manuscript describes the frequent change of military control of the area, but insists that "during this period *pūjas* [daily worship] and festivals were conducted properly." The manuscript also says that half of the Dīṭcitars had fled with a Naṭarājaṉ image to Tiruvārūr, where there was a subsidiary shrine of Naṭarājaṉ, and that they had for eighty years kept an image hidden under a tamarind tree there.[67] The manuscript does not provide a date for the return of the image, but an inscription in the Rāja Sabhā describes the return of the image in 1773.[68] It would seem reasonable to imagine that the image was in Tiruvārūr for the eighty years prior to that date, and that worship was carried on in Citamparam with the substitute images.

Most history books for this period focus on the rivalry of the French and British, which peeked in the mid-eighteenth century, and do not provide an obvious explanation as to why the image might have been moved for safekeeping in the last decade of the seventeenth century. When we reread the history without that European bias, however, we immediately realize that it was in the last decade of the seventeenth century that the generals of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, the most anti-Hindu of the Mughal rulers, began coming into South India. The Nāyak or governor of Tirucirapaḷḷi built the fourth wall of the Citamparam temple as a protective wall, but by the late seventeenth century he could no longer protect the temple. The neighboring Nāyak of Gingi was easily overthrown in 1698 by the Mughal general Saadatullah Khan, who stayed in the area and, in 1710, was honored for his conquests by being named the Nawāb of Arcot. It was probably in 1693 or just before the Muslim armies first arrived that the priests took the image to Tiruvārūr. By 1773, when the image was returned, the situation was much calmer. The British had by that time gained the upper hand against both their French rivals and the local Muslim rulers. The Marāthas, who were staunch supporters of Hindu temple worship, had also set up a kingdom in Tañcāvūr. It was probably the Marātha ruler who suggested the restoration of the image, for he is said to have made a donation of 12,000 *pon* of gold to help with the restoration (*Mackenzie Manuscripts*).[69]

Shortly before the end of the eighteenth century a new style of donor arrived at Citamparam. Pachaiyappa Mutaliyār was from a leading landlord family from Kāñcīpuram in the northern part of Tamiḻnāṭu, an area that had become newly influential because of its proximity to the European traders in Madras. His attachment to Citamparam seems to have been motivated purely by devotion and alarm at the disrepair that had come over one of India's most renowned Hindu temples. Although he died in 1794, his wife, and especially his mother-in-law Suppammal, carried on his rebuilding work, and the statues of all three were later placed in the East Kōpuram.[70]

The British, once they had finally won control of South India, initially tried to set up a policy of no governmental interference in religious matters. That policy did not work very well in South India because the lawcourts of the British were soon used by competing sectarian group, and competing priestly groups, each seeking to gain control of the wealth associated with South Indian temples and *maṭams*.[71] While most of the claims were ostensibly over the traditional rights to perform worship in the temple, those rights generally carried with them either title to certain lands or at least an indirect control over the considerable landed wealth of the temple or *maṭam*. The result of this overall situation was that exceedingly complex cases were set before the courts in which the histories of some of the great temple complexes were cited in detail.

Gradually the British administration decided that it had to become directly involved in temple management, and it slowly developed a set of regulations, which came to be known as the Hindu Religious Endowments Act.[72] According to this act the priests of the major temples were able to carry on their traditional duties, but the management of the temples was conducted by an office set up by the government, which collected the fees charged to worshipers for different rituals and scheduled the priestly groups for the various regular forms of worship. The priests in places like Maturai bitterly fought the imposition of the government managers, and contested the loss of a variety of ritual roles, which the priests had once done in their secondary role as representatives of the traditional Hindu rulers.[73] The priests in Citamparam completely rejected the government's efforts to take over the administration of what they considered a private temple owned and managed by them, and government found it hard to know how to respond.

With Indian independence in 1947, the Department of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments of the Tamil̲nāṭu government became responsive to domestic political forces. Tamil̲ politics throughout this century has been characterized by various strategies to deal with the issue of the place of "Brāhmaṇas" in society. A major change in Tamil̲ society occurred in the nineteenth century when the Brāhmaṇas who had come from North India during medieval times (often called the Smārta Brāhmaṇas) went after English education in a big way. These Brāhmaṇas had been given special villages or *brahmadēyas* by the medieval landlords and kings and they had continued with their study of Sanskrit texts, but they had weak economic roots in South India because they preferred not to do priestly work in the temples and did not work on the land. With their English educations, these Brāhmaṇas quickly got the best positions in the civil service and the educational institutions, but their success led to resentment on the part of others in South Indian society. The best-known line of resentment came from the traditional landlord castes such as the Vēḷāḷas and Mutaliyārs, who felt their traditional leadership role challenged and formed an anti-Brāhmaṇa political coalition. This coalition was first called the Justice Party and later the DK, DMK, and AIADMK, and it continues to be the primary political force in Tamil̲nāṭu.[74] In 1947 the Congress Party, which had led the struggle for independence, was in power, but it too was influenced by the general anti-Brāhmaṇa tone of Tamil̲ politics.

For the temple priests of Tamil̲nāṭu, the emergence of an anti-Brāhmaṇa political movement was a complicated problem. Temple priests are considered *brāhmaṇa*, but they come from a very different background than that of the Smārta Brāhmaṇas, and generally did not take advantage of the opportunities for English education. In a sense they suffered twice from the social changes taking place in that they did not get the employment opportunities that went with English education, but they did suffer at least some of the backlash against *brāhmaṇas* stirred up by the anti-Brāhmaṇa politics. The Citamparam temple priests were particularly vulnerable to the backlash in that the legends associated them with North India, even though they had not come to the South in medieval times nor did they live in *brahmadēyas*,[75] and they had refused to cooperate when the government had earlier tried to take over the administration of the temple. The new Tamil̲nāṭu government quickly took them to court, but in a celebrated case rendered in 1954 the Madras High Court ruled that the priests could continue to own and operate the temple "for their own denomination." In a second challenge by the government the court again upheld the priests in 1981.[76]

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Citamparam priests' battle to keep management control out of the hands of the government was possible mainly because some wealthy families provided major donations. The Paccaiyappa Mutaliyār family endowments or *kaṭṭalais* are still important to the temple, as are others that have come from Mutaliyār caste members who are friends of that family. Somewhat more important in the present century is the substantial and ongoing support the temple receives from the business community of Tamil̲nāṭu, the Ceṭṭiyārs, who now supply the major *kaṭṭalais* of the temple. They have financed extensive renovations of the inner corridors, first roofing over the second corridor and later adding the black marble pillars and tile work to the first walkway or *pirakāram*. The Rāja of Ceṭṭināṭu continues to supply the rice for the temple, ensuring that there is enough not only for the temple ritual but for all the priestly families as well.[77]

The *Potu or* Assembly of Dīṭcitars has attempted in recent years to regulate larger donations carefully. The traditional arrangement of endowments or *kaṭṭalais* continues, and most of the extensive materials used in worship (such as oil for lamps and rice for offerings) are provided by old *kaṭṭalais* established by *maṭams* in the seventeenth century or by newer ones set up by the Mutaliyār or Ceṭṭiyār families. Although these *kaṭṭalais* make the priests financially dependent to some degree, the *Potu* or Assembly vehemently asserts that it alone determines what role the materials provided by the *kaṭṭalai* have in the worship life of the temple.

A second and newer channel of large donations is the renovation committees[78] made up of laymen who handle the flow of government grants and private donations intended for rebuilding portions of the temple complex. A recently constituted renovation committee undertook a whole series of major projects such as the rebuilding of the superstructures of the four gateway towers, and handles very large sums of money, but in theory, at least, it is subject to the management control of the Assembly meeting. A large proportion of the funds of the renovation committee is provided by the state government, in spite of the court rulings that hold that the temple is privately owned, and the government has been increasingly restless with this arrangement. In 1955 and again in 1987 the renovation work of these modern renovation committees was celebrated in traditional *mahākumbhābhiṣekam* or rededication ceremonies. Thus far the priestly Assembly has been able to walk the tightrope of allowing prominent laypersons to form renovation committees and raise funds from the government and from individuals without losing its traditional control of temple management.

Conclusion

The role of the donors in the life of a temple complex such as Citamparam undergoes change much more frequently than any other aspect of its tradition. The donors are in a sense the representatives of the economic and political power of each generation, and although the Citamparam temple has conservative traditions even in the matter of money management, in the long run the economic and political power of each generation lends its support in a form suitable to its own interest.

Nevertheless the pattern in which Citamparam was influenced by its donor community was quite different from that of most South Indian temples. Its remote location during its early history meant that it did not have the direct dependence on landlords that most other temples did, but on the other hand its mysterious reputation did attract political leaders of all kinds who felt that it might provide legitimacy for their rule. Eventually the combined reputation of its priestly community and its close ties to kingship meant that it came to have a preeminent reputation in cultural matters as well, so that saints, religious reformers, court poets and founders of *maṭams* all sought to associate themselves with the place.

For most South Indian temples, the *economic* interest of the donors was foremost during the early life of the temple. In most situations it was when landlords were able to create grain surpluses on their irrigated lands that either the landlords themselves, or the traders who established themselves in the towns to help handle the surplus, built a temple in order to give institutional form to the expanding interests of the newly prosperous community. Some of these interests involved direct support of religious practice through expenditures on music, dance, and priestly specialists, but the economic functions of the regional or *nāṭu* temples went much further than supporting religious activity. The temples also served as the "bank" for exchanging wealth in the broadest sense of the word, in that large landlords frequently gave as gifts their excess lands or crops to the temple, and the temple (often with the help of *maṭams*) provided employment and food for the most vulnerable groups or individuals in society. Traders had especially complex economic relations with the temples, for they were often able to get control of surplus grains through the temples, and it was also through temples that they were able to introduce new types of goods and services into an area. (The shops within the temple compounds still carry the latest jewelry, clothes, books, and now electrical goods.) The trading castes, along with the castes of artistic and priestly specialists, had relatively widespread contacts, and it was from those groups that expanding horizons in matters of culture and life-style arose. The agriculturalists, on the other hand, had more localized cultural standards and ultimately controlled the surplus production at its source. In this situation the temple served as the institutional center through which the diverse interests of these groups could be sorted out, and the community as a whole could determine what level of cultural richness it could afford and how distribution of resources would be determined.

The situation in Citamparam appears initially to have been somewhat different from the common pattern just described in that during the early stages of its history it was in a rather remote area somewhat removed from the immediate interests of landlords, traders, and others. By the time the temple was expanded by the Later Cōḻa kings starting in the eleventh century, the area around the temple had had irrigation introduced, so that from then on the temple walls have been covered with inscriptions recording the typical "banking" arrangements already described.

In contrast to the early years of the *nāṭu* temples where the landlords are in charge from the beginning, all the hymns indicate that in Citamparam's early years it was the special community of ascetics living there that was prominent. What is amazing about the stories of the early years, however, is how clearly *political* are the contacts the public has with the place. Whether we focus on the story of the Bengal king, that of the legendary Cōḻa Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ, or the contact between the Pāṇṭya prime minister, Māṇikkavācakar, and what may have been a Kaḷabhra king and his Śrī Laṅka guest, all three stories place royalty in Citamparam when it was still a remote place somewhat removed from the social and economic forces then operating in the more developed areas of the Kāvēri valley.

Continuing this special political link is the fact that the most important single event in the early development of the Citamparam temple complex was the decision of Ātitya I in the ninth century to make a dramatic political gesture in the form of a donation of a gold roof for the remote Citamparam temple. In some ways this act was, of course, in a long tradition of royal temple donations in other places. The Gupta kings of North India had been actively involved in temple donations, and the Pāṇṭyas and Pallavas in the South had as well. On the other hand, those kings had generally built new temples or made minor donations to existing ones. Furthermore in the Kāvēri valley the pattern of local landlords and traders financing temples was already well established by this time.

Ātitya's act was, however, a much more deliberate political gesture than were the usual donations of other political figures. It signified the conclusion of his march up the Kāvēri valley and the Koṅku plateau and the establishment of his sovereignty. It also, of course, identified the style of sovereignty he sought in that it provided a larger umbrella of cultural and religious unity to the domain, while in a sense it indirectly indicated that he was bypassing the more direct route to political power, which would have been through a takeover of *nāṭu* councils and *nāṭu* temples.[79] For the temple tradition this development created a highly ambiguous situation. As a result of its receiving this benefaction, the temple had incorporated into its tradition the political role of providing cultural focus for the Cōl̲a Empire. On the other hand Ātitya's attraction to the place was that it was a remote and mysteriously autonomous religious institution, and in a sense he apparently wanted it to continue with that reputation.

The political involvement of Citamparam went in a somewhat different direction in the eleventh century when Kulōttuṇka's general, Nāralōkavīran̲, provided walls, towers, and tanks for the temple complex. This building program made the temple look much more like the other major temples of the region, and as we have suggested its functions did start to include some of the ''banking'' functions regularly carried out by temples that started as *nāṭu* temples. He was, however, also defining a new political mandate for the temple, in that his ruler, Kulōttuṅka, had a difficult political challenge. He had moved from the Cāḷukya kingdom in central India and had taken over the Cōl̲a throne after a period of great confusion. He badly needed a clear symbol of legitimacy and Nāralōkavīran̲'s rebuilding work reestablished the traditional link between Citamparam and the Cōl̲a state just when the state needed symbols of the traditional order in the worst way. For the temple the new responsibility involved including royal rituals in its courtyards, but it seems to have been able to do that without becoming permanently tied to the destinies of the Cōl̲a throne.

As the Cōl̲a Empire declined, the Pāṇṭya and Pallava rulers who made short-lived claims on power tried to utilize the temple in Citamparm for legitimizing their efforts in even more direct ways than the Cōl̲as ever had. In the longer term, however, not much was to come of their efforts, and when the Cōl̲a Empire fully collapsed at the beginning of the fourteenth century, Citamparam suddenly and permanently lost its ties to the political arena.

What the fourteenth-century loss of a political role makes one realize is that Citamparam had over the centuries become known as a center for cultural activity as well as political ties. In retrospect one can see that even the very early Śaiva saints such as Tirumūlar and Māṇikkavācakar had made long journeys in order to associate their spiritual teachings with Citamparam. And during the years of Cōl̲a glory, it was often the literary projects of the emperors that were somehow associated with Citamparam. As the fourteenth century dawned the flurry of activity associated with the temple was the reform movement of Śaiva Siddhānta, which although started elsewhere was given a major boost when one of the Citamparam priests, Umāpati Śivācāriya, became the movement's primary spokesperson. In the centuries to follow a number of other religious reformers settled in the town and a significant number of *maṭams* developed, representing a whole range of theological opinion.

In a summary way, then, we see three different forces in society successively coming to play the dominant role in the financing and managing of South India's temples. Initially the temples were built and managed by *economic* forces controlled by the landlords and traders who dealt with the surpluses produced by an irrigated rice-growing area. Citamparam's participation in this kind of tie with society was somewhat delayed because during its early years the area nearby was not yet settled, but from the twelfth century on many of its donations also came from local landlords. Second, as time went on *political* forces came to play a more central role in controlling the wealth associated with temples as the medieval kings allowed for tax benefits, arranged land sales and purchases through temples, and made outright gifts to the temples. Citamparam was the temple most directly linked with the Cōḻa court from the ninth century on, although the tie was broken temporarily during the reigns of Rājarāja I and Rājēndra I, the two rulers who experimented with royal temples near their palaces. Finally, from the fourteenth century on, *cultural* forces in the form of groups of priests and *maṭams* were able to have the primary say in the management of the temples for they held sufficient economic and political power in their own hands and knew how to use their institutional strength to gain more.

In each of the three periods, economic, political, and cultural forces would, of course, each have had a role to play. In the early period, landlords controlled the surpluses, but *brāhmaṇas* could demand important land rights before providing services, and kings (or the queen mother in the case of Cempiyan Mahātēvi) could control where stone temples were built. In the middle period kings were both powerful and personally interested in linking temple ritual and their court, but the cooperation of landlords was still necessary to finance a temple, and priests ultimately had to agree on the form of the ritual. In the third period the power of the priests and the *maṭam* heads derived from the fact that landlords were responding to political pressures and channeling their surpluses into the safer institutional structures of the various religious establishments. In all three periods the financial arrangements of the temples were complex, and in a large measure it was the temple network that provided an institutional skeleton on which the economic, political, and cultural forces of society could continually be rebuilt. In all three phases Citamparam was unique in the degree to which it went its own way and worked out its finances in a way that it felt would be most consistent with its special ritual traditions. Tamiḻ society acknowledged that special role and looked back on Citamparam not only as the place that gave legitimacy to the Cōḻa kings and much of the Tamiḻ literary tradition, but as "the Kōyil" or "The Temple" of the whole society.

Notes

1. The similarity of the Hiraṇyavarmaṉ story to the Śrī Laṅka story of the king who founded the first dynasty of Śrī Laṅka is striking. The content of the two stories is similar

in that both have to do with "Lion" kings or "*Simha*" kings who wandered to the south from North India (Śrī Laṅka scholars disagree whether their king Vijāya was from Bengal or from Northwest India). The form of the stories is also similar in that each was preserved by a religious institution seeking to explain its origins. The two stories have different sequels in that in the sixth-century Dhātusena had the Śrī Laṅka story turned into the foundation pillar of a political manifesto for his kingdom called the *Mahāvamsa*, and there was no equivalent political use of the Citamparam story.

2. Srinivasachari (1941) suggested Simhavarman II or III; Sathianathaier (1957) suggested the father of Nandivarman Pallavamalla; and Somasundaram (1955) (1963) suggested Simhavarman II (550–75), whom he thought (agreeing with Balasubrahmanyam [1943]) might have served as a Cō̱la ruler at one time.

3. The place-name "Gauda Dēsa" (the ancient name of Bengal) is mentioned at least six different times, and the geography of the route traveled is described at least five times.

4. Majumdar 1943. Gauda Dēsa referred to the western side of Bengal (Vanga was the south and east delta area, and Varendri the north). It is, of course, always possible that the story is a fiction told for the benefit of pilgrims from Bengal, an area that had developed strong ties with South India under the Sena rulers of the twelfth century but came under Muslim rule in the thirteenth when the pilgrim traffic to the South reached its peak. An example of Bengal pilgrim interest in Citamparam is the inscription *ARE* 1934–35, 105, which tells of a Gangōli from Southern Rāḍha (a latter name of Bengal) providing a flower garden for the deity in 1262.

5. One thinks immediately, of course, of the story of Vijāya and the founding of the ruling family in Śrī Laṅka, or of the story of Kauṇṭinya who married the native princess Somā and founded the first kingdom of Cambodia, but there are many more.

6. Cō̱la family legends do not present a single "origin" story. What they do all agree on is that the dynasty descended from the sun or the Solar Dynasty, an emphasis that is also central to the Hiraṇyavarma̱n story. The earliest of the kings usually mentioned in the Cō̱la geneological lists are Karikāla and Kōcceṅkaṇā̱n who will be discussed shortly. No Simhavarma̱n or Hiraṇyavarma̱n is mentioned in those lists.

7. *Epigraphica Indica,* vol. 17; also *Ten Pandiya copper plates* (1967).

8. Buddhadatta 1915–28. The texts were *Abhidammavatara* and *Vinayaviniccaya.*

9. *Tami̱l Nāvalar Caritia,* verses 154–57, cited in Natarajan. 1974. p. 10.

10. Natarajan 1974, p. 10.

11. See, for instance, Arunachalam 1979.

12. See Sastri (1935) 1975, p. 103.

13. The tendency is most notable in Kerala where Hindu, Christian, and Muslim shrines all contain evidence of earlier Buddhist occupation. Desai (1957) and K. R. Venkataraman (1973) provide examples of Jaina worship centers in Tami̱lnāṭu being converted to Hindu.

14. *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam* of Perumpa̱ṟap Puliyūr Nampi chaps. 58–61.

15. *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal* Purāṇam of Perumpa̱ṟap Puliyūr Nampi chap. 61. The thirteenth-century author of the written text described the local king as a "Cō̱la," which would make sense in that his sponsor, Cuntara Pāṇṭya, had just taken Citamparam from the Cō̱las who had held it for four centuries. He would be unlikely to know who the ruler had been eight centuries before his time.

16. Tirumaṅkai himself was a local chieftain, and Kulacēkara, the other Vaiṣṇava hymn singer who visited Citamparam, was a king from Kerala, and one might even see their interest in visiting Citamparam as having some political implications.

17. He is alluded to in many inscriptions and copperplates. The fullest account comes in the hagiographies of Cuntarar, Nampi, and Cēkki̱lār who included him among the *nayanmār* or Śaiva saints.

18. *Puranāṉūṟu* and *Kaḷavali.*

19. Nagaswamy 1979.

Appar, in the seventh century, referred to Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ's earlier incarnation as a spider, and Tirumaṅkai, the Vaiṣṇava saint also of the eighth century, complained about Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ's building Śaiva temples. From these two references we know that he lived before their time, but perhaps not too much before.

20. There is a great deal of recent writing on this topic. Heesterman (1957) provided some of the basic textual material. Dumont (1962) formulated the problem. More recent reflections on it include two articles by Heesterman (1978, 1979).

21. *Arthaśāstra,* 1915.

22. Barua 1946.

23. McKnight 1979.

24. Appadurai 1978, 1978b.

25. The Mauryan Aśoka lent support to the Buddhists; the Sātavahānas, to the Jainas; and the Guptas, to the Vaiṣṇavas.

26. Jalauka the Śaiva son of Aśoka ruled in Kashmir; Śantamūla was an Ikshvāku king in Andhra; and Śaśānka ruled in Gauda Desa in the sixth century.

27. Tambiah 1976.

28. See McKnight 1979.

29. See especially the *piracacti* (Sanskrit: *praśasti*) or eulogistic introduction to the inscriptions of Kulōttuṅka I later in this chapter.

30. Wittfogel 1970.

31. Thapar 1984.

32. Ray 1959.

33. Stein 1980.

34. Some of the most recent writing on the Indus civilization can be found in Possehl 1979.

35. Much has been written on the subject of caste in South India. For a recent field study, see Beck 1972.

36. The interplay of these two more aggressive groups in society in challenging the Vēḷāḷa control is well brought out in the study of inscriptions at different periods of the history. See, for instance, Karashima 1984.

37. See Stein's (1980) somewhat controversial and exaggerated thesis about the centrality of these *nāṭus.*

38. In spite of considerable work on the social history and geography of this period, the complete story has yet to be told. The overall picture is difficult to construct because inscriptions are not yet available and the rich literary record is focused on devotion and preserved by those looking on it as sectarian scripture. Hardy (1983, pp. 256ff.) deserves credit for some interest in Vaiṣṇava geography, but he shows little awareness of social history.

It is fascinating that in the very similar social atmosphere of Śrī Laṅka it was the Buddhist monasteries that became the religious and cultural focus of the newly wealthy irrigation society. The reason probably is that the Lambakanna clan was centered in Anurādhapura where, at an earlier time, important Buddhist and Jaina monasteries had been established. As the society prospered the monasteries engaged in bitter rivalry for Lambakanna support, but it was only when the rival clan of the Lambakannas, the Moriya clan, came to power that the monastery that had supported it, the Mahāvihāra monastery, was able to assume the dominant position among monastic institutions.

39. See Govindasamy 1965.

40. Gopinatha Rao 1919–20, verse 18. The records seem to credit both Ātitya and Parāntaka with gilding the roof in Citamparam. For the debates on the dating of Nampi and the linking of Ātitya's work with Nampi, see Sadaśiva Paṇḍarathār 1949, 1967, Veḷḷaivāraṇaṉ 1962, 1969.

41. See Rowland (1953) (1967, p. 185), who makes Narasimhavarman II or Rājasimha (r. 690–728) responsible for the Shore temple of Mahābalipuram and the Kailāsanāth temple of Kāñcīpuram. Rock-cut structures were, of course, at least a century earlier. See also Soundara Rajan 1972, Ramaswami 1975.

42. *ARE* 1888, 118. On the definition of a *taniyūr*, see Mahalingam 1967.

43. Umāpati refers to the king as "Apāya" and "Kulacēkara," honorific titles used for both Ātitya I and Rājarāja I. This has served to confuse historians and lead many to thoughtlessly choose the better-known Rājarāja. There are, however, frequent inscriptional references to kings sponsoring recitations of the *Tiruppatikam* before Rājarāja's time (for example *ARE* 1903, 373, and *ARE* 1929, 99). There is also the further evidence that when Nampi is describing the saint Itaṅkali (verse 65 of his *Tiruttoṇṭar Tiruvaṇṭāti*, see Periya Purāṇa), who was a member of the Cōl̲a family, he uses the phrase "who was an ancestor of Ātitya," clearly indicating that Ātitya was the current ruler.

44. The separate but related stories of how the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava canons came to be compiled are most interesting. Nampi is described as living in a place called Tirunāraiyūr near Citamparam and carrying out the compilations described in the late ninth century at the orders of Ātitya. Six miles from his home, a *brāhmaṇa* settlement for Kṛṣṇa devotees from North India was set up by Parāntaka I a short time later (unpublished Karandi Copperplates of Rājēndra I) in a place called Vīranārāyaṇa. It was one of these *cottai kulam brāhmaṇas* named Nāthamuni who at the beginning of the tenth century took up the task of collecting the long lost hymns of the Vaiṣṇava *āl̲vārs* and setting out the Vaiṣṇava canon called the *Divya Prabandham* (see *Tiuraȳmol̲i*). Recitations of each of the canons immediately became popular forms of worship in the respective traditions. See Neevel 1977.

45. Kailasapathy (1968) stirred up a major controversy when he argued that the Caṅkam literature of the early Tamil̲s was the product of an oral tradition. Whether once oral or not, it was a highly sophisticated literary tradition, as was that of the itinerent Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava hymn singers.

46. B. Venkataraman 1976, Spenser 1983, Balambal 1976.

47. The inscriptions *ARE* 1902, 335, 347, and 362 all call the temple in memory of Rājātitya *Rājātitya Icuvarum Mahāteva* "Great Lord Rājātitya" temple, and refer to it as a *paḷḷipaṭai* or funerary temple. *ARE* 1909, 635, says that the temple now called Umāmahēcuvarar of Kōnērirācapuram was built in 977 by Cempiyan Mahātēvi as a memorial to her husband Kaṇṭarātitya. Barrett's 1965 and 1974 efforts to find a "datable" Naṭarājan̲ image eventually focus on this temple, which has a proper image on the stone wall. All temples of this period had both stone and bronze Naṭarājan̲s. Zvelebil's (1985) argument (see Story 3) that Cempiyan helped spread the Naṭarājan̲ cult is misleading in that, while he is right that her temples included these figures, it is also the case that in her well-documented life she is never described as visiting Citamparam.

48. *South Indian Inscriptions,* vol. 2. This entire volume is devoted to the very long and detailed instructions Rājarāja issued for both the building and the operation of this royal temple.

49. Stein's (1980, pp. 331ff.) argument was challenged by Nagaswamy (1984).

50. *ARE* 1888, 118, seems to be an inscription from the time of Rājēndra I, but it is on a wall built long after his reign and must have been recopied after the renovation (see Story 2).

51. Kulke 1978a.

52. There are, for instance, over seventy inscriptions of this kind on the Śrīraṅkam temple alone.

53. The Vaiṣṇava texts *Divyasūricarita* and *Yatirāja-vaibhavam* actually refer to the hated persecuting king as "Krimikantha" or "Putrid Neck" Cōl̲a, but most scholars identify the ruler as Kulōttuṅka II.

54. *ARE* 1891, 18; *ARE* 1936, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124; and *ARE* 1937, 5.

55. Historians are a little unsure about the dates of Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ, and some have suggested that there might be two rulers with that name. The inscriptions in Citamparam form a steady stream and are dated from the third to the thirty-sixth years, so they seem to come from one ruler. Scholars suggest either 1231 or 1243 as possible starts of the reign, but 1231 would seem to make it easier to coordinate his accomplishments and those of Cuntara Pāṇṭya.

56. We saw in the previous chapter what some of his building projects were. It is also interesting that many of his inscriptions involve channeling income to villages of *brāhmaṇas* called *ceaturvēdimangalams*; especially the one founded in his name, the Cuntara Pāṇṭya Ceaturvēdimangalam (*ARE* 1962–63, 154, 156; *ARE* 1958–59, 306, 325). His link with *brāhmaṇas* is also evident in his use of Sanskrit in some inscriptions, and in his sponsoring of the copying of texts (*ARE* 1961–62, 168, is one of the few inscriptions in the front courtyard of the Murukaṉ temple he built, and possibly the site of the text copying).

57. The inscription *ARE* 1913, 296, for instance, lists two Pallava officers, along with four categories of priests or ascetics, as the Managing Committee of the temple. *ARE* 1934–35, 104, refers to the duties of a group of Smārta Brāhmaṇas (perhaps the Smārta Brāhmaṇas who still work in the temple and who were discussed in Story 1) who make offerings to a Vināyakaṉ image on the east and who chant the Vedas at various times during the festival procession and *apiṭēkam* of the deity.

58. Minakshi 1977. The dynasty was of *brāhmaṇa* background, and Rājasimha named the Kailāsanāth temple after himself and took a major role in its administration.

59. See, for instance, the recent study of Fuller (1984).

60. Almost certainly this most famous record of Pāṇṭya history was written in Citamparam. The author had been initiated by a local sage named Vināyaka of the Māḷigai *maṭam* in Citamparam, and he therefore took the name "Perumpaṟṟap-puliyūr Nampi" or "Great-Devotee of Tigertown Nampi" (Sastri [1935] 1975, p. 677).

61. In Story 1 we discussed the present-day practices in temple management at Citamparam, where responsibility is exclusively in the hands of the Dīṭcitar priests.

In Citamparam and elsewhere the names of persons on the Managing Committee of the temple (usually at this time called the *mūlaparuśaiyār*) are more frequently listed in the period after the breakdown of Cōḻa rule. This probably indicates that it was a period of uncertainty and it was more important to be sure who was in charge. Many of the names on these committees appear to be priestly names, and it may also be the case that priests were becoming more directly involved in management due to the general uncertainty about other sources of authority.

For a comparison with the situation in the large Tiruvāṉaikkā temple of Jampukēcuvara, see Younger 1983.

62. Muslim historians speak of Malik Kafur camping in Kandur and making a side trip to Brahmastpuri, where he tore down "*lings*" and "Deo Narain" out of adjacent temples. S. Krishnaswami Aiyangar (1921, p. 76) had suggested that the temple involved was Citamparam because he mistakenly thought it then had shrines of both Śivaṉ and Viṣṇu.

There is, however, a lot of other evidence that Malik Kafur's camp, called by the Muslim historians "Kandur," was in Kannanūr or modern Camayapuram in central Tamiḻnāṭu. There is also independent evidence that he did desecrate the Śrīraṅkam and Tiruvāṉaikkā temples, two temples that are adjacent to one another, which house Viṣṇu and Śivaṉ images respectively, and that were only six miles from his camp in Kannanūr.

63. See *Kōyil Oḻuku* (1961), which is the Śrīraṅkam temple chronicle during this period.

64. Appadurai 1978.

65. In Tiruvāṉaikkā the earliest inscriptional evidence (*ARE* 1937, 5) of a *maṭam* is 1237. In Citamparam the earliest is 1234 (*ARE* 1958–59, 305). Within a year or two there

was another (*ARE* 1962–63, 568), and two more in 1242 and 1253 respectively (*ARE* 1935–36, 8 and 3).

A more detailed inscription on *maṭams* is *ARE* 1935–36, 11, which records a donation *from* the Gōḷaki *maṭam* of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai for the Citamparam temple. Tiruvaṇṇāmalai was in the area west of Citamparam (later to become a famous temple town on its own) where Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ held sway, and the inscription was dated in his name in 1248.

Slightly later examples of *maṭam* constructions credited to Cuntara Pāṇṭya are referred to in inscriptions *ARE* 1958–59, 309, 311, and *ARE* 1962–63, 154, 156.

By Vicayanakaram times the function of the *maṭam* is sometimes described as the "feeding of ascetics," as is the case in *ARE* 1913, 323, 335, 339. Administrative matters associated with the Citamparam temple were sometimes entrusted to ascetics in the Vicayanakaram period. Thus *ARE* 1935–36, 2, says that the donations of Kṛṣṇtēvarāya for festivals and repairs had not been properly cared for, and so Acyutatēvarāya in 1529 is reendowing them and entrusting them to a "*tapasvin*" named Periyatēvar. A related point is made in *ARE* 1913, 349, when Venkatastēvarāya in 1588 says that his donation for feeding "Śaiva mendicants" is placed under the supervision of Namaśivāya Uṭaiyār, the superintendent of all *kaṭṭalais* or endowments.

The shifting of resources from temple to *maṭam* is a direct transfer in the somewhat later inscription *ARE* 1958–59, 330, which records a gift of land for a *maṭam*, which the donor had just purchased from the *tānattār* or managers of the temple. Finally, the direct role of *maṭams* in managing the temple is evident in *ARE* 1962–63, 572, dated in 1794, which records how Vaidyalinga Tambirān of Tiruvaṇṇāmalai-Ātīṉam (later term for *maṭam*), who originally hailed from Māyuram, did some renovations in the temple.

Which of these *maṭams* were managed by *brāhmaṇas* and which by Vēḷāḷas is a difficult question to determine.

66. The Tarumapuram Ātīnam still maintains a *kaṭṭalai* office in the Citamparam temple.

67. The manuscript says that under the Nawābs between 1686 and 1756 there was "chaos." Then under the French between 1757 and 1764 there was "confusion." Later on under the Nawāb again between 1764 and 1784 there was "more confusion." Under Hyder Ali from 1784 to 1788 there was a "mass exodus." After this the British took over and "provision for *pūja* was made." The Nawāb again took over from 1789 to 1795 and again "ruled badly." In 1795 the British again took over for two years but the Nawāb then came back to power until 1806. The manuscript then summarizes by saying that "during this period *pūjas* and festivals were conducted properly." After 1806 came the rule of the British and Mr. Wallace, and there were "provisions made for the temple."

Finally, during an eighty-year period the Dancing Image was kept under a tamarind tree in Tiruvārūr, and half of the Dīṭcitars had moved there with it. On the way back to Citamparam with the image, a donation of 12,000 *pons* had been made by the Marātha ruler then in Tañcāvūr. The manuscript clearly insists that worship had been going on in Citamparam throughout this turbulent period, so one has to assume that, even when one image was in Tiruvārūr, worship went on in Citamparam (*MacKenzie Manuscripts*).

Swamy (1979) did not seem to realize that the dates used in this manuscript, like those in inscriptions, are in the Śaka era which began in 78 C.E. Because of this mistake he placed all these difficulties in the seventeenth century rather than the eighteenth. Loud (1990) followed his lead in this regard.

68. Somasundaram (1955), 1963 gives the date of the inscription as 1733, but that is just a misprint. The inscription in Grantha Sanskrit script is the only inscription in the Rāja Sabhā and was overlooked when the inscriptions of the temple were copied. I have seen it myself, and it is reported in Natarajan (1974) and Swamy (1979) as well.

69. As it turned out the temple did undergo another scare with the arrival of Hyder Ali

from Mysore in 1780. (The dates in the *Mackenzie manuscripts* are a bit off.) He was chased from the area by the British in the Second Mysore War, and, contrary to what some scholars think, his son, Tipu Sultan, who continued to harrass the British on the western side of South India, never did come to Citamparam.

70. These donations are described in inscriptions *ARE* 1962–63, 162, 163, and *ARE* 1913, 342.

71. There were court cases throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries dealing with such important temples as Śrīraṅkam, Citamparam, and Maturai, as well as important *maṭams* such as Kāñcīpuram and Tarumapuram.

72. Between 1817 and 1833 there was an early experiment with interference known as Regulation VII. Having seen some of the difficulties they ran into administering this policy, a looser form of control was tried between 1833 and 1863. In 1863 things were reversed again and, with the introduction of Act XX, the government took over quite a bit of responsibility for the management of temples. In 1927 Act II was passed which was generally known as the Hindu Religious Endowments Act. After the British left India, the administration of temples continued under the state government of Tamiḻnāṭu. The state government modified the Act in 1959. See Mudaliar 1976.

73. Fuller (1984) studies the impact of this act on the priests of Maturai.

74. See, for instance, Hardgrave 1965.

75. The Dīṭcitars during my visits to the temple did not want to be called Smārta Brāhmaṇas, and pointed out the differences in their history and the fact that the Sāstrikaḷ they employ for certain ritual activity are more properly Smārta Brāhmaṇas. The court ruling does describe the Dīṭcitars as "Smārta Brāhmaṇas", and Loud (1990) follows that usage.

76. Śrī Nataraja Kunjitha Dikshitar, Secretary, Podu Dikshitars of Śrī Sabhānayakar temple, Chidambaram, as representing the *Podu Dikshitars of Chidambaram v. The Comissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Administration) Department.* Madras High Court, 1981.

77. A massive ritual purification of the temple known as a *mahākumbhābhiṣekam* was financed by the Nattukkottai Ceṭṭiyārs in 1891. The priests frequently comment on the fact that all rice is provided by the Rāja of Ceṭṭināṭu.

It was also the Rāja of Ceṭṭināṭu who founded the Annamalai University nearby, and who continues to chair its board of directors.

78. The committee was very active when I was doing research in the early 1980s, and it had a large office near the east entrance. The money raised was being used for major renovations to the south and west *kōpurams* and to the porches of the third wall.

79. I do not agree with all aspects of Stein's (1980) argument that Cōḻa sovereignty was a kind of decentralized "ritual hegemony," but he was pointing to an important aspect of the special type of Cōḻa rule. His argument might have been both clearer and stronger if he had known more about Cōḻa ties with Citamparam.

III

WRITINGS

In addition to being a place where a great variety of people worship, and where kings and others have expressed their leadership in society through their building activity and their donations, Citamparam has also been the focus of much of the best of Tamil̲ culture. Saints and reformers naturally tried to link their religious endeavors with this important temple, and poets, musicians, and dancers all felt that their creativity was put in its best light when associated with Śivan̲ Naṭarājan̲. What is most interesting, however, is that the temple was understood to have such a close tie with religious literature.[1]

Some of the formal responsibility the temple had for the Śaiva religious literature we have had occasion to refer to earlier. The legendary rituals associated with the production of Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam* and *Tirukkōvaiyār* have been described elsewhere (Stories 1, 2, 4, and 6). His dramatic retirement from government service, his withdrawal to the life of a quiet ascetic (the form in which he is always pictured in sculpture), and his presentation of his completed works to the deity before he himself entered the sanctum never to return are the legends around which the sanctity of this great poetry is established. In the case of the *Tēvāram* hymns of the three itinerant hymn singers, the legendary connection with Citamparam is the story of the efforts of the Cōl̲a king and Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi (Stories 1 and 4) to recover the manuscripts from the temple so that they might be set to music. And in the case of the hagiographies of the saints' lives, the legends start with the miraculous beginning where Cuntarar was given the opening line *"tillai vāl antaṇar tam aṭiyārkkum aṭiyēn,"* "I am the servant of the servants, the Antaṇar who dwell in Tillai" (Stories 1 and 6), and completed four centuries later when Cēkkil̲ār for a full year sat in the Thousand Pillared Hall singing the *Periya Purāṇa* and being presented in ceremonial ritual before the deity each night (Story 4).

There are a number of ways in which this tradition of legitimizing religious literature through an association with the Citamparam temple might be explained. The more obvious explanation would be that in a sociological sense all literature needed legitimization during the early years of the tradition. In the earlier Caṅkam era the *pāṇar* took their poetry and music to the ruler, and then to a college or *caṅkam* of scholars in the court. The largely nonliterate public could appreciate the recitations they heard, but the literary skills brought great respect and the judgment of the quality of the art was something only the ruler and the *caṅkam* (college) of scholars were expected to judge. In the case of religious literature a somewhat different judgment would be involved, and Māṇikkavācakar, who may have even supervised a *caṅkam* during his years as minister in the Maturai court, chose to present his poetry to the deity in Citamparam and to the company of sages who attend the deity. When the Cōḻa kings subsequently became directly involved in acknowledging the role of the deity and the priests in legitimizing the *Tēvāram* hymns and the hagiographies of the saints, the society had a way of authoritatively identifying its canon of religious literature.

In addition to this general social and political sense about the need to legitimize religious literature ritually, there is also a tradition that holds that the temple in Citamparam has special ties with the very foundations of language and especially with the legendary grammarian Paṭañjali. The priests of Citamparam have traditionally been understood as linked to Paṭañjali, the great Sanskrit grammarian of the second century B.C.E.[2] They take a special *dīkṣā* or initiation (see Story 1) called the Paṭañjali Dīkṣā, which was passed on to them by this grammarian, and it is only after this initiation that they are considered eligible to learn the *Paṭañjali Sūtra*[3] or the secret ritual especially prescribed by Paṭañjali for use in this temple.

The public understanding of these links between Paṭañjali and the Citamparam priesthood is that in their deepest sense they are secret and mysterious and beyond common understanding, but in a general sense they are related to the fact that Śivaṉ's dance takes place within the "space" (*ākāśa*) or the "heart," from which the first sound or speech emerges. There is a reverence for language and art associated with this tradition, and it is often said that only through Naṭarājaṉ that true artistic expression can be achieved. This reverence for language and art was recognized in a public way when the grammar book of Paṭañjali was ceremonially placed on the back of an elephant in the midst of a festival procession, which is described in the fourteenth-century *Kōyil Purāṇa*.[4]

As a result of the early sociological and political reasons for linking literature with the temple, and the more esoteric theories about Paṭañjali and the nature of language, the temple in Citamparam has been thought to be especially associated with literacy and culture. This reputation has attracted an endless stream of poets, musicians, and dancers to the halls of the temple over the centuries.

Unfortunately the rich traditions of ritual dance were suddenly stopped by the British colonial authorities early in this century, and it is now very difficult to reconstruct a sense of that great art. The priests' festival handbook indicates when dances were performed in the different festivals, and we can at least imagine those settings, such as the seventh day of the festival when much of the day was set aside for dance, and recreate for ourselves a sense of the role dance had in the ritual. There is now an annual dance competition held in the second *pirakāram*, and those who have continued the art of dance outside of the temples are slowly relearning some of the ritual dances.

In the case of music, the flood of new compositions has never stopped. The traditions of music are integral to both the daily and festival rituals. Full-time musicians are a part of every moment of the daily ritual, and worshipers know the different drum beats and tunes that prepare them for each aspect of the ritual. At festival time special musicians arrive from all over the country. Many in the vast crowds at the festivals know immediately that the *rāga* Natta accompanies the images out of the inner sanctum to the chariots, and that the *rāga* Ārapi accompanies them when the crowd gets its final, sad *darśana* or glimpse of them as they return to the inner sanctum. Over the centuries great composers have joined in the daily and festival worship and composed special pieces, which are associated with each of the great ritual moments. These traditions are handed down with utmost care through the line of *nākacuram* players, most recently led by the legendary Vaidyanathan and by his disciple Radhakrishnan.

Within the huge amount of literature written about Citamparam, some pieces have been recalled for centuries and have become part of the living tradition of the temple. We will attempt to examine some of the literature that has clearly become a recognized part of the tradition of the temple, and will try to draw out from it something about the religious experience of those who have worshiped in the temple.

In Story 5 we will examine the two official temple guidebooks written in the twelfth or thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries respectively. These books on the legendary part of the tradition represent exceptional literary accomplishments in Sanskrit and Tamiḻ respectively. They tell the legends of the temple, but they are also literary masterpieces in their own right, and their innovative structures tell us a lot about the theological understanding of their authors.

In Story 6 we will examine the large number of hymns and stories about religious experiences that took place in Citamparam, but which one finds in the hymnbooks, biographies, and theological works of Tamiḻ Śaivism. Much of this material is now contained in the official canon of Tamil Śaivism known as the *Tirumuṟai*, but we will be examining the material on Citamparam, whether it comes from the *Tirumuṟai* or not, in terms of the historical period in the life of the temple that it reflects. Some of the religious poetry in these works is exceedingly beautiful and widely known in its own right, but in the context of the present study we will be focusing primarily on what that literature tells us about the worship traditions of Citamparam.

Notes

1. In medieval times the temple seems to have housed the library of religious literature (a function now taken over by the *maṭams*). In *ARE* 1961–62, 168 and 169, for instance, we hear about the "Sarasvati-Bhaṇḍaram" reorganized by Svāmidēraṟ and are told that it employs twenty scholars who copy and compare manuscipts in Tamiḻ and Sanskrit.

2. Accounts of this legendary connection are found in the relatively late sixteenth-century *Chidambara Patañjali* by Patanjoti Munivar and the eighteenth-century *Patañjali Charita* by Rama Bhadra Dikṣita (See Somasundaram, 1963.). They were, however, certainly old legends and are reflected in many aspects of the ritual done at the temple. In the fourteenth-century account of the festival, for instance, they are already assumed to be familiar.

3. The ritual texts I have seen were entitled variously *Patañjali Paddhati, Naṭarāja Nitya Pūja Sūtram,* and *Pūjāpātañjalam.*

4. Chapter 5 or verse 381.

Story 5

The Legend Books and the Local Traditions

Every large South Indian temple has an oral tradition (*tala purāṇa*), which explains to the worshipers why the temple came to be located in that place, what the unique features of the deity or deities in the temple are, and who are the model saints or devotees who are associated with the place. In most cases these traditions continue to be strictly oral in nature,[1] but a number of circumstances have prompted the publications of written versions of these essentially oral traditions. The most common reason for publishing a summary of a temple tradition is because the temple attracts a reasonable volume of pilgrims, and pilgrims want to hear the local traditions either before or after visiting the temple. A second reason for writing out a version of the temple tradition arises when priests and worshipers are caught up in a theological controversy, and an author interprets some of the traditions in an effort to further a particular theological position. A third reason for writing out the temple traditions arises in a situation such as there was in the seventeenth century when wealthy donors asked a circle of renowned poets to prepare ornate literary versions of the major Śaiva temple traditions; these versions of a few major temple traditions are quite widely known[2] and form the primary basis of David Dean Shulman's (1980) study of the Śaiva temple traditions of Tamiḻnāṭu.

The two written versions of the Citamparam tradition represent exceptional literary efforts stimulated by the first two of the circumstances that give rise to the conversion of oral traditions into written form. Citamparam had a large influx of North Indian pilgrims in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and it has a beautifully written version of its temple traditions in Sanskrit called the *Citamparamāhātmya*,[3] which was no doubt intended to assist those pilgrims. A few other South Indian temples had brief *māhātmyas* written, which are now found in the Sanskrit *purāṇas*, but the Citamparam tradition is the only one I know of that was written up in its entirety and has become a major piece of Sanskrit literature. A century or so after the composition of the *Citamparamāhātmya*, the great Śaiva Siddhānta theologian Umāpati Śivācārya[4] wrote a Tamiḻ paraphrase of that Sanskrit account of the tradition, which he called the *Kōyil Purāṇa*.[5] In addition to providing a Tamiḻ version of the temple traditions his work also served as a thoughtful defense of the relatively new theological position of the Śaiva Siddhānta. While each of these two texts was written to serve a specific religious purpose in its day, they also provide us with a picture of the evolving set of oral traditions as the authors of these texts came to know them at two important points in the temple's history. Before examining the oral traditions as those texts present them, we must first go back and look at the earlier hymns, inscriptions, and stone sculptures to see if they provide us with enough clues to reconstruct the general outlines of the oral tradition with which these authors must have been dealing.

Reconstructed Early Tradition

The standard first question of worshipers, and one that is included in all temple legends, is, How did this temple come to be in this place? From the very earliest of the hymns right down to the present, the answer to this question at Citamparam is a richly embellished account of the forbidding *tillai* forest, the “tiger” of Kāḷi who lives there, and the attraction this forbidding place has for courageous ascetics. Poets speak of “remote Tillai”[6] and its isolation, and of wondrous “Tigertown” (Puliyūr) as if it were the favorite destination of every pilgrim.[7] The Cōḻa kings put the “tiger” symbol on their flag, and people commonly took the name Perumpaṟṟappuliyūr or “one deeply attached to Tigertown.”[8] Which features of this forest and tiger story would be emphasized at any given telling of the temple legend would depend on who was telling the story to whom, but the perennial sense of a dangerous and wondrous natural setting is always there as a central element in the tone of worship associated with the temple.

The second question most temple legends take up is, Who is the deity worshiped in this temple? In the case of Citamparam the answer to this question focused on the dancing image of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ. For many of the other Śaiva temples of South India the answer to this question involved a story of Śivaṉ's encounter with a local goddess, and in some ways the answer in Citamparam also included that dimension for there are legends about a dance contest between Piṭāri/Kāḷi and Śivaṉ.[9] For reasons that would be hard to reconstruct this story of the dance contest faded fairly early from the center of the tradition and the central legend came to concern itself with the solo dance of Śivaṉ, the *ānanda tāṇḍava* dance. The question the legends came to focus on was, Why it was that this wondrous cosmic dance, a dance intended to provide the joyful rhythm of the universe, should take place in the special “space” of Citamparam? Here the poets seem eager to let the wondrous and supernatural dimension of this event speak for itself. They call upon Viṣṇu and the goddess to “witness” to what they saw. They intentionally confuse the dance performed to humiliate the ascetics of the Tārukā forest with the repeat performance of that dance in the “dance on earth” regularly performed in Citamparam. They describe with elegant exaggeration the hall or “space” in which the dance takes place, the emotions of those awaiting the dance, and the crescent moon, snake, and tiger skin that adorn the deity. It is almost as if one can only describe the deity indirectly, as that which brings about this panorama of religious emotion. Fairly early in the tradition this resolve to explain the deity by providing a detailed sense of the emotions of worship came to settle on the composite figure of the Snake-Human Paṭañcali (Tamiḻ spelling) who is referred to in some of the earliest hymns[10] and portrayed in some of the earliest sculpture and temple structures.[11]

Paṭañcali is at the same time a divine witness, a symbol of the natural order, and a highly emotional human worshiper. As the snake figure on which Viṣṇu normally reclines, Paṭañcali first heard about the dance from Viṣṇu, and he had Viṣṇu's permission to go and seek a place where he might see the dance. Instructed by Śivaṉ's court where the only place on earth to witness the dance was, he proceeded through an elaborate underground snake civilization until he arrived at what was in some sense the "center"[12] of the world at Citamparam. Reborn to human parents, his snake body took on a human head and he began to take upon himself all the emotional longing of the other human worshipers as he awaited the supernatural dance. It is through this most unusual figure that the tradition came to focus on what was involved in the worship experience in the presence of the Dancing Image. And it was through the many different stories associated with this lovable devotee that poets came to feel comfortable indirectly describing what the Divine Dancer was like.

The third question usually taken up in temple traditions is, Who were the famous people who have been blessed in the temple? In the case of Citamparam most of these stories involve royal figures. Probably the most important in the early years of the temple's involvement with the Cōḻa dynasty was the story of Kōcceṅkaṇāṉ or King Red Eye, which has already been discussed. This legendary royal figure with his disabling skin and eye condition becomes a model of the self-deprecating human who is thrown at the feet of the grace-bestowing Lord. The joyful *ānanda* dance is full of cosmic energy, and yet it is the "feet" of god that are the source

Paṭañcali (Snake-Human)

of mercy for all who recognize their need of grace or *aruḷ*. With the royal figure serving as the model, the worshipers recognize the way they are united together in their sense of *aṭimai*, or "enslavement," to the "feet" of the Lord. While they themselves are enslaved to the feet of the Lord, they are at the same time provided with the joyful energy of the cosmic action of God, even as was the much respected Kōccenkaṇāṉ.

These main features of the oral tradition are alluded to in enough hymns and reflected in features of the physical construction frequently enough that we are justified in describing them as the core of the oral tradition as it would have been recounted for centuries before the first of our written texts became available in the twelfth or thirteenth century. The written texts of the twelfth or thirteenth and fourteenth centuries respectively can then be thought of as efforts to retell this oral tradition in a form that would be suitable to the particular interests of particular audiences. In the course of this retelling, the central features of the story were to remain the same, but important modifications were made both to make the stories more appealing to the specific audiences involved and to argue for certain theological clarifications that the authors considered important. The traditions as seen through the eyes of these authors are worth examining in some detail.

The Citamparamāhātmya

The *Citamparamāhātmya* is clearly a pilgrim guidebook written for the use of North Indian pilgrims to Citamparam, in Sanskrit the language of all-Indian religious discourse. The text is not dated, but it reflects the situation of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when large numbers of devout worshipers were fleeing to the famous temples of the South[13] as the armies of the Delhi Sultanate swept across North India destroying many temples and using the stones of others to build mosques. In this situation, it was important for the pilgrims to have some acquaintance with the local traditions of the temples to which they were going, and it was also important that they feel comfortable about the somewhat unfamiliar ritual traditions they would come in contact with. The *Citamparamāhātmya* is a beautifully written pamphlet, put together by someone intimately familiar with the traditions of both the South and the North, and it carefully sets out to accomplish both of these goals.

The structure of the pamphlet follows the outline of the three questions we have already laid out as the three primary questions for a temple tradition to address. In each of its three sections, it focuses on a single hero for whom the section is named, and then draws into that section story fragments from a variety of religious sources. Each of the sections has a nicely balanced discussion of its central focus, and the three sections are interrelated into a neatly structured overall logic of theological meaning. Let us look at the individual sections first.

Viyākirapāta

The hero of the first section is a North Indian sage named Viyākirapāta, "Tigerfoot," who left for South India with the explicit purpose of finding one of the most arduous places on earth to do penance. He settled on this forest of *tillai* scrub trees because the thick undergrowth was virtually impassable and the bark of the scrub contained a poisonous sap. He set himself up by a tank of water in this forest and started to worship a *liṅkam* or phallic representation of Śivan̲ by placing flowers over it and by doing *yoga* exercises before it, especially one where he stood on one leg for hours. Frustrated that he could not get the best flowers from the tops of the trees, he prayed that he might be given tiger feet so he could climb better. His prayer was granted.

The author here describes the setting of the temple as the "*tillai* forest" in the traditional way, but the emphasis on the "forest" part of the symbol makes it more familiar to the North Indian reader. In the South Indian tradition the natural order was usually made manifest in a particular setting through a particular species of tree.[14] So for South Indians the emphasis in the story has always been on the *tillai* tree, and the temple, town, and region are all still affectionately spoken of as "Tillai." In the North Indian tradition, as found, for example, in the two great epics of the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa,* the "forest" provides the natural background and is pictured as a forbidding domain into which humans can penetrate only with careful ascetic preparation.[15] In this story the two traditions are combined when the story speaks of a "forest" of "*tillai*" trees. In a way the reference to the *tillai* forest is a reference to the forbidding character of the place and the need for ascetic strength if humans are to live there, and yet the text does carry on the South Indian sense that this is in some sense a sacred tree and a sacred place. David Shulman (1980) in his study of the other temple legends notes that in each of the stories of South Indian temples there is an emphasis on the particular sacredness of particular temple settings, and certainly in the case of Citamparam this emphasis could not be stronger. Nevertheless, in this text the overall story is about the ascetic courage of the hero Viyākirapāta as he faces the formidable challenge of this forest, and this is a theme that worshipers familiar with the *Rāmāyaṇa*, for instance, would find most familiar.

The name of the hero of this first legend-cluster is Viyākirapāta, "Tigerfoot" (Sanskrit: Vyāghrapāda), a Sanskrit name that pilgrims would recognize as the name of a famous ascetic with a totally different story in the *Mahābhārata* XIII.14ff. The creation of this ascetic hero who comes from North India is clearly intended to provide the North Indian pilgrims themselves with a spiritual model, and as far as we know a hero of this name was not part of the oral tradition of the temple before this time.[16] On the other hand, the symbol-cluster surrounding the name would not have seemed that unfamiliar to local South Indian worshipers as they came to hear the story. They had for centuries associated this *tillai* forest with the "tiger" symbol and that part of the name would sound very familiar.[17]

In the local South Indian traditions around Citamparam, the symbolism of the "tiger" would be immediately linked up in the listener's mind with the local myth about the fierce goddess Piṭāri (Kāḷi) who ruled this forest with the help of her tiger. By having a devotee of Śivan̲ take on tiger feet, the author of the text was as it were co-opting that traditional story for a new purpose, for the effect of the story was to argue that the power in the realm of the natural order associated with the goddess Kāḷi and her tiger was now under the overall domain of Śivan̲. This Śaiva appropriation of tiger power echoes the well-known local myth in which Kāḷi is challenged by Śivaṉ to a dance contest, which would determine who was to control the area. All goes well until Śivaṉ raises his leg straight over his head in an *ūrdhva tāṇḍava* position, and she out of modesty refuses to continue and acknowledges his superiority.

The pilgrims from the North, it seems safe to assume, were orthodox Śaivas, who by the twelfth century frowned on the worship of Kāḷi, which included offerings of meat and wine.[18] The early tradition in Citamparam, on the other hand, seems to have attempted to combine Kāḷi worship and Śivaṉ worship. This is evident in the locally popular myth of the dance contest, and in the physical arrangements for worship in which two shrines, one for each deity, were set up facing one another (see Story 3). Kāḷi worship had probably much earlier been curtailed somewhat, for we hear little about it in the hymns of even the seventh and eighth centuries, but the major ritual "solution" to the problem was carried out just as this text was being written, when in 1250 the local ruler Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ built a separate temple for Piṭāri (Kāḷi) outside the town boundary, where her worship continues to this day.[19] For South Indians the affection for Piṭāri and her "tiger" would continue not only in the little temple outside of town but in the nickname of "Puliyūr" or Tigertown, which continues to this day to be commonly used to refer to Citamparam in hymns and other popular expressions of devotion. Nevertheless, in the account of the tradition prepared for North Indian worshipers in the thirteenth century, this tradition of Kāḷi worship was almost totally hidden, and the only reference to the tiger in the forest that remained was the one that allowed a tigerlike ascetic to worship Śivaṉ.

Halfway through the story of Viyākirapāta, the tone of the story dramatically changes as the narrative shifts from an account of asceticism, forests, and tigers to a concern with a baby and its milk supply. Viyākirapāta's father had come to hear of his son's life in the far off forest of South India and he sent a fellow sage to the South to order his son to return home and marry. Viyākirapāta obeyed, and the son of the marriage, Upamanyu, was fed on the milk of the heavenly cow, Kāmadhenu. Viyākirapāta then took his whole family back to the *tillai* forest, but the child cried for his supply of heavenly milk and Śivaṉ had to miraculously produce an "ocean of milk" for him in a local tank, which is still a revered spot just to the south of the Kāḷi temple.[20]

The story of the baby, Upamanyu, and his cry for milk is a *Mahābhārata* story with which North Indian pilgrims would have been familiar.[21] In its North Indian form the story emphasized the cosmic power of Śivaṉ, recalling to mind not only the all-supplying cow Kāmadhenu, but also the myth of the churning of the ocean where Śivaṉ swallowed the poison so that the ambrosia of eternal life could be churned up from the bottom of the ocean. In the setting of the *Citamparamāhātmya*, the story provided North Indian worshipers with a subtle introduction to the way in which the ascetic deity Śivaṉ had been domesticated in South Indian religious discourse. In South Indian Śaiva myth Śivaṉ was no longer the wild hunter and mountain-dwelling recluse of North Indian myth, but was almost always pictured in a domestic context surrounded by his wife or wives and one or both of his sons

Vināyakan̲ and Murukan̲.[22] By crafting a story in which Viyākirapāta was both an ascetic and a concerned family man, this South Indian emphasis on ascetic discipline within the context of family life could be introduced to the North Indian pilgrims without making the difference between the two traditions seem too striking.

We do not know if there was a story in the earlier oral tradition about a baby's cry for milk, but there are quite a number of South Indian Śaiva stories that include that theme. Many of the Śaiva images of South India are images of Somaskantan̲, the image that includes Śivan̲, Umā, and the baby Murukan̲ when the baby is at the nursing stage.[23] Another very popular story of an infant fed with divine milk is the story of the saint Campantar who as a baby was left on the steps of a temple tank while his parents bathed. When the child cried, Śivan̲ and Umā could not resist him, and the parents returned from their bathing to find the baby being nursed on the breast of Umā as the divine family sat on the back of their bull vehicle in the clouds.[24] Exactly why the author of the *Citamparamāhātmya* felt that a story of a baby's cry for milk was an essential part of this legend-cluster we do not know, but the overall effect of this conclusion on the story of the ascetic Viyākirapāta was to turn his ascetic ideal into a warm and joyous religious path. This allowed the story to continue to be an ascetic one, but also blended it in nicely with the rest of the Citamparam tradition.

Before leaving the Viyākirapāta legend-cluster, we need to examine another important religious matter unobtrusively brought up by the author in the telling of the story. In describing Viyākirapāta's initial religious practice in Tillai, the text says that he was "worshiping a *liṅkam*." In later Śaiva practice *liṅkam* worship was the most common form and this reference would not be notable. At the time of the writing of this text, however, there was a major dispute between those who still used anthropomorphic forms and those who used the *liṅkam* form, which at least in the South would appear to be the newer form. This dispute is reflected, for instance, in the argument of the *Śiva Purāṇa* in favor of the *liṅkam* form.[25] Citamparam housed the most famous of all the anthropomorphic forms, that of the Dancing Image, and the author of the text felt it was important that his North Indian readers be reassured that the *liṅkam* form, with which they were more familiar, was also deeply rooted in the Citamparam tradition.

Just how deeply rooted in the Citamparam tradition the practice of *liṅkam* worship was at that time is difficult to say. We know that Kōpperuñciṅkan̲ had had a small *liṅkam* temple constructed in the outer corridors of the temple in the mid-thirteenth century (see Story 3), but that temple might well have replaced one that had been there earlier. Kōpperuñciṅkan̲ himself shared the position of the *Śiva Purāṇa* and called the deity in the *liṅkam* shrine the *mūlanātan̲* or "primal deity" (*ARE* 1913, 305), but that position did not seem to be adopted by the worshiping community in Citamparam as a whole. Kulke (1970) in his study of the *Citamparamāhātmya* went to the extent of seeing the legend-cluster of Viyākirapāta as the text of a "Liṅkam Cult," which was fighting for control of the temple against the followers of the "Naṭarājan̲ Cult" (whose text was the Paṭañcali legend-cluster). This almost certainly overstates the problem, for there is no other evidence that Citamparam ever housed separate cults centered on the worship of the *liṅkam* and the Dancing Image respectively. The religious problem in Citamparam was to find a way of preventing the formation of separate cults, and the *Citamparamāhātmya* was careful to reassure its North Indian readers that the more familiar *liṅkam* worship was a part of the tradition in Citamparam, even as they came to worship the long revered form of Naṭarājan̲, the Dancer.

Paṭañcali

In contrast to the Viyākirapāta section, which is concise and seems to reflect the carefully integrated thought of a single author clearly writing for North Indian readers, the Paṭañcali section is three times as long and is made up of a large number of loosely linked story fragments. Here the author seems to be working with a well-established oral tradition and maybe even a Tamil̲ pamphlet of some sort, and the concern is to convey the central tradition of the temple to the pilgrim audience. Even though some of the story fragments were originally borrowed from familiar Sanskrit myths, the author does not elaborate on those myths for his audience, but rather concentrates on conveying to them the toned-down religious atmosphere in which the stories were told in the oral tradition. Even the careful attention to physical detail, such as the origin of the tiger skin, the snake, and the demon that adorn the image, is preserved so that one almost has the impression of listening to a temple guide reciting the oral tradition to a small group of pilgrims. While this section is, therefore, somewhat more difficult to read than the first legend-cluster because of the many different fragments of oral tradition that are packed into it, it does preserve the the oral tradition's highly emotional and even erotic sense of Paṭañcali as a fascinating model devotee who ''waits'' in Citamparam for the dance to begin.

The opening story in this section tells in some detail the well-known Sanskrit myth of the sages of the Tārukā forest who were proud of their ascetic feats and their sacrifices.[26] Śivan̲ and Viṣṇu were sitting in the divine realm discussing these sages and mischievously decided to test them. Śivan̲ assumed the form of a young naked beggar, Piṭcāṭan̲an̲, and Viṣṇu the form of a beguiling female, Mōhinī. Together they entered the village of the ascetic sages, and an erotic melee took place as the males went in a mad chase after Mōhinī and the females scrambled to get near Piṭcāṭan̲an̲. (This scene in the story is recorded in highly erotic ceiling paintings in the entranceway of the goddess Śivakāmacuntari's temple.) When the sages eventually recovered their senses, they were both angry and ashamed, and decided to fight back by demonstrating their spiritual power by performing the greatest sacrifice ever. Having gained spiritual power by the sacrifice, they had the sacrifice produce a fierce tiger, a dangerous snake, and a powerful demon in successive attempts to destroy Śivan̲. He simply took each and subdued it, and finally used the tiger skin and the snake for adornment and stood on the demon. Śivan̲'s next rejoinder to the challenge of the sages was to frighten them with a wild dance. Soon, however, the function of the dance started to change, and as the dance evolved, the sages and Viṣṇu began to watch with rapt attention. Aware that the whole cosmos was being caught up in the dance, Śivan̲ asked his consort, the goddess Umā, to be the witness on behalf of all beings to what had come to be the greatest dance of all time.

Although in the Viyākirapāta story some allusions were made to images that would be familiar to the North Indian pilgrim from Sanskritic sources, in this story the main narrative is clearly a Sanskritic one. In this version of the narrative, however, the familiar features of the Sanskrit myth have been toned down by providing only a minimal description of the setting and the dramatic events, and the focus has been put on answering the questions of the ordinary South Indian worshiper. Why does Śivaṉ wear a tigerskin and a snake, and why does he stand on a demon? Is devotion to Śivaṉ as powerful a form of worship as sacrifice? Is asceticism or devotion a higher form of worship? Is Viṣṇu equal to Śivaṉ? Why should the goddess and the Dancing Image be worshiped together? By turning the attention of the worshiper to these questions about the ritual forms of worship, the oral tradition had focused the attention on devotion and the images of Śivaṉ and Umā. The author of the *Citamparamāhātmya* decided to leave that style of storytelling virtually untouched.

As was the case in the Viyākirapāta story, the tone of the Paṭañcali story also changes dramatically halfway through. The second half of the story starts when Viṣṇu returns to his heavenly abode and tells the snake Ananta, who curls up to provide a bed on which Viṣṇu reclines, about the wondrous cosmic dance he had witnessed. Ananta is beside himself with emotion as he longs to witness the dance, and Viṣṇu gives him permission to go to the abode of Śivaṉ and ask when he might witness the dance. Śivaṉ promises to dance once on earth and arranges for Ananta to undergo a human birth and to find his way to Citamparam, where the dance is to be held. Following the careful instructions of Śivaṉ, Ananta traces an underground route through a complex snake civilization until he emerges in Citamparam at the "heart" of the cosmos. When Ananta is reborn to human parents in a form that is human in the upper half and snake in the lower, his human mother understandably drops him from her hands and gives him the name *Paṭ* (fell) *añcali* (from the hand). In the remainder of the story both the snake and the human sides of Paṭañcali's personality are carefully developed.

The name "Paṭañcali" is a revered and fairly common name in Sanskrit (Patañjali). It was, for instance, the name of a great grammarian of the second century whose legendary links with Citamparam were referred to earlier, and it was also the name of the most famous writer on *yoga*, the author of the *Yoga Sūtras*. The author of the *Citamparamāhātmya* could be sure that his readers would find the name familiar and would know of its etymological meaning, but the wonderfully composite figure to whom worshipers looked as the model devotee at Citamparam would almost certainly be a fascinatingly new dimension of the story for them.

In setting forth this image of the snake as the model devotee, the tradition was drawing on a host of old South Indian themes connected with snakes. South Indians consider snakes to be natural symbols of hidden spiritual power. Many temples in parts of South India provide groves near the temple to house the snakes. In addition, South Indians often set up small shrines called *nākarācas* or snake-kings under grand trees, near natural rock formations, and beside anthills. These shrines are thought to provide a channel of communication with what is considered an underground world of hidden power. The snake in these contexts is a symbol not only of hidden power but also, and more specifically, of the power of sexuality and fertility. Most of the worshipers at the small *nākarāca* shrines are young females who are often embarrassed to speak about their worship there, but who indicate that it has to do with sexuality and fertility. In the context of the Paṭañcali story the snake is described as male, but clearly takes on feminine traits and acts in a female role as it weeps and waits in longing for the dance to begin.

The theme of waiting and longing for the beloved is an old theme on which there is considerable discussion in early South Indian poetics. Love-in-separation was expressed with great force as a human emotion in the early Caṅkam poetry,[27] and it was taken up in all branches of sectarian religion in later centuries as a vehicle for expressing the devotion the soul feels for the distant divine being. (It is central, for instance, to the hymns of the Vaiṣṇava saint Nammāḻvār.)[28] It was in the spirit of this tradition of erotic longing that the saint Māṇikkavācakar much earlier in the tradition had mentioned Paṭañcali as a model devotee,[29] and this same spirit characterizes the role he is given when the legend books retell the story.

One further dimension of the Paṭañcali story deserves comment. Viṣṇu, the central deity of a rival sectarian branch of Hinduism, is featured as the companion of Śivan in the first half of the story and as the one who sent the snake on which he normally reclines to become the chief devotee of Śivan in the second half of the story. The polemical device of incorporating Viṣṇu into subordinate roles in a variety of Śaiva stories is an old tradition of South Indian Śaivism,[30] which was practiced with great intensity in the context of Citamparam where each rival sect carried on its own worship tradition in the same temple setting (see Story 3), but it was probably a pattern of sectarian discourse with which North Indian pilgrims would have been familiar as well. In this story the sectarian dimension of that element of the story is not central for there are many myths that speak of Viṣṇu's Mōhinī form longing for Śivan, and having Viṣṇu's representative Paṭañcali share that longing only enhances the understanding of this kind of erotic anxiety. The fact that this dimension of the story has the indirect effect of making a figure from Vaiṣṇava mythology subordinate to Śivan reinforces the overall point the Śaiva writer wants to make that the highest form of devotion is to the Dancing Image of Śivan.

The author of the *Citamparamāhātmya* has described the two animal-human characters of Viyākirapāta and Paṭañcali as ideal embodiments of the two types of religious personalities common in his day. In retrospect we can see Viyākirapāta as a Śaiva answer to the aggressive tones of the rival sect of Kāḷi worship, whereas Paṭañcali serves as a Śaiva answer to the more emotional tones of the rival sect of Viṣṇu worship. Viyākirapāta is a model of asceticism, whereas Paṭañcali is a model of devotion. Viyākirapāta is held in awe by the worshiper, whereas Paṭañcali is held close and comforted. When the two types are seen as two sides of a common religious personality, one thinks of the structural dualities that are often used in Indian thought, such as in the opening of the *Mahābhārata*[31] where the cosmic struggle is seen as the unresolvable contest between the birds and the snakes. In this contrast Viyākirapāta is pictured as birdlike in that he longs to be at the top of the tree, he stands on one leg for long periods of time as if weightless, and, most important in Indian symbolism, he is the aggressor or the initiator of action. On the other hand Paṭañcali, the ''snake'' in the other half of the symbolic contrast, ''rises up'' from below the earth and carries all its sorrows and burdens with him. As in other places, such as the *Mahābhārata*, where this symbolic contrast of "birds" and "snakes" is used, the text will go on and show how the ambiguities of history, as seen in the king Hiraṇyavarman, move back and forth between these polar types. For the worshiper, however, the primary longing is to be unambiguous, and whether one's religious inclination leans toward being an ascetic or a devotee one can find in either Viyākirapāta or Paṭañcali a powerful animal-human model that captures both the natural forces and the human dreams that make each of those forms of worship so meaningful.

Hiraṇyavarman

The third cluster of legends centers around the figure of the Bengal king Hiraṇyavarman, who is said to have been healed in the water tank of the *tillai* forest and later returned there to build the initial temple. This part of the narrative is not well known to the worshipers today, but it must have been of very great importance in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries when Muslim armies were overthrowing the political systems of North India, and when the Cōla Empire, which had for centuries been closely linked with Citamparam, was finding it hard to survive. The careful discussion of the role of kings in the administration of the temple is clearly a matter with which the twelfth- or thirteenth-century author was deeply concerned, but he also was able to place his discussion of the matter in terms of the traditional religious question about who the famous worshipers of this temple were.

The hero of the story is a king born with the name Simhavarman in an illustrious line of kings in Gauda Dēsa, a region of Northeast India included in what has generally been known as Bengal. Simhavarman's father had two wives. He was the only son of the eldest wife, while the younger wife had two sons. He suffered from a discoloration of the body and as a prince traveled all over India looking for a cure. Hearing of the forbidding *tillai* forest, he went there, and instructed by Viyākirapāta and Paṭañcali, he bathed in the pond and rose up with a new golden coloring and was renamed Hiraṇyavarman or "Golden Ruler." While he was in the *tillai* forest his father died, and in accord with their father's wish his younger brothers sent the sage Vasiṣṭha to find him and to ask him to assume the throne. Reluctantly he returned and was crowned, and then took his family, court, and army to the *tillai* forest where he settled down and built the Citamparam temple. The narrative then hesitantly suggests that he became the founder of the Cōla dynasty.

The core of the story, which is about a king with a skin problem being healed and then building the temple, is so similar to the Kōcceṅkaṇān story already discussed that the similarities and differences need to be analyzed carefully. As indicated earlier (see Story 4), the Kōcceṅkaṇān story was given a written form by Nampi in the late ninth or early tenth century just as the Cōla kingdom under Ātitya I was beginning to show imperial ambition. Its central point in that account was to explain the Early Cōlas' religious policy, which was to portray themselves as the chief devotees of the realm and to encourage Śaiva hymn singing and the use of Citamparam as the most revered of sacred places. During the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Middle Cōlas had radically altered that policy and had tried to develop the idea of royal temples associated with their palaces. By the end of the eleventh century the Later Cōl̲as had returned to a modified version of the Early Cōl̲a policy, with the difference being that the temple in Citamparam was developed by the Later Cōl̲as into a major institution with an elaborate ceremonial ritual. By the middle of the thirteenth century the Cōl̲as were no longer in direct control of the Citamparam region, and the local non-Cōl̲a ruler Kōpperuñciṅkan̲ was making his presence felt around the Citamparam temple.

The Hiraṇyavarman̲ legend as it is told in the text of the *Citamparamāhātmya* is clearly an attempt on the part of this author to deal with a difficult political situation. By shifting away from the explicitly Cōl̲a story of Kōcceṅkaṇān̲ (while keeping the feature of skin discoloration and the possibility of a Cōl̲a connection) he was able to deal with the tricky political situation of South India, and by describing the king as from Bengal, the place in North India where most of the pilgrims were coming from, he was able to appeal directly to the interests of his pilgrim readers. (It would seem unlikely that he would have ''invented'' the Hiraṇyavarman̲ legend without any precedent to go on, and one must imagine that there was some story of a Bengal king's visit on which he built as he developed a modified version of the well-known story of Kōcceṅkaṇān̲.)

The political message underlying the text is that political institutions are highly volatile and that the sacred center of Citamparam remains stable as a variety of political leaders come there for refuge. Something like this message had always been the attitude of the priests in Citamparam, and one can sense it even in the Kōcceṅkaṇān̲ story which was told at first during the period of the Cōl̲a rise to power. In the thirteenth century when there was widespread political unrest all around, this message had new power. This message must have had a special impact on the devout of Bengal, for their most recent and only orthodox Hindu rulers, the Senas, had come from the South, and they would no doubt want to learn something about South India's political support of temple traditions in the hope that they might someday have a renewal of Hindu rule.

Faced with the chaos of Muslim conquest many devout Hindus were making the pilgrimage to Citamparam and other places in the South. Inscriptions of this period describe donations of Bengal pilgrims for the upkeep of the Citamparam temple,[32] and many inscriptions describe the establishment of ''*camaturvēdimangalams*'' or reserve villages for *brāhmaṇas,* presumably many of them recent refugees from the North (see Story 4). Throughout this period the temple in Citamparam did in fact seem to live up to this author's claim and serve as one of the stronger institutional anchors of the day. Not only did refugees stream there, but the neighboring rulers were also hastening there to establish their fleeting authority whenever they could (see Story 4). We do not know of fleeing North India kings who came this far, but an old story of a wandering king who had come from Bengal and founded the Cōl̲a line was one that would touch a lot of bases and make the temple a most appealing pilgrimage site.

The second half of the Hiraṇyavarman̲ story makes a radical new departure, in much the same way as we have seen in the case of the other two stories. This half of the story focuses on the priests rather than the king, and appears to have been rewritten a number of times as the priests sought to have their status placed in the best possible light for the new pilgrim clientele, which was beginning to make up a sizable portion of their worshiping community.

According to the most natural version of the story, the priests of Citamparam once made up a special priestly community living in Bengal called the Mūvāyiravar or the "Three Thousand," and they were invited by king Hiraṇyavarman to accompany him back to Citamparam. This version of the story leaves the focus on the king, his entourage, and his accomplishments, but it does identify the priestly community by a special name and implies that they brought a special ritual tradition to Citamparam. This special name and references to special rituals had been regular features of hymns on Citamparam for six or seven centuries before the *Citamparamāhātmya* was written,[33] and this story just provided a specific explanation for the special status this priestly community already enjoyed in the religious world of South India.

What this story did not do was satisfactorily answer the questions North Indian pilgrims may have had about whether South Indian priests lived up to the latest North Indian standards of orthodoxy. To put the matter simply, North Indian pilgrims were probably shocked to find that many of the South Indian temple priests did not know Sanskrit, and did not always follow the Sanskrit texts on ritual known as the *Ākamams*. The temple priests were also considered low in status by the Smārta Brāhmaṇas who had recently arrived from North India and were living in special villages called *brahmadēyas* or *caturvēdimangalams* donated by the landlords or kings. The Smārta Brāhmaṇas had carefully maintained their North Indian lineages and would have been able to speak to the pilgrims in Sanskrit.[34] These Smārta Brāhmaṇas disdained work in the temples, which they thought of as bringing them into contact with the "unclean" public, thereby lowering their ritual status.[35] The Mūvāyiravar in Citamparam were certainly already considered a very special priestly community, reputed for their ability to do special "Vedic" sacrifices, but they too would have come under the general criticism of South Indian temple priests to some extent, and the legend that traced their ancestry to Bengal in North India did not directly address the issue of orthodox standing.

Another version of the story of the priests' origin is, therefore, woven into the text at a number of points. According to this version the priests were from the Antarvedī region of North-Central India between the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers, and Hiraṇyavarman was forced to detour on his trip south with his court so that he could go there and convince them to accompany him to the *tillai* forest. The crucial difference between this version and the first is that it places the original home of the priests in the Antarvedī, from where the highest-status *brāhmaṇas* are reputed to come, rather than from Bengal, which had become part of the orthodox Hindu fold relatively late. The text also specifically says that in the Antarvedī these priests were famous for their performance of Vedic sacrifices, and it was for that reason that Hiraṇyavarman had heard of them and went to seek them out. In this version of the story Hiraṇyavarman has clearly become a subordinate focus, and the text is at pains to point out the "North Indian" and "Vedic" credentials for which this editor wants the Mūvāyiravar to be known.

The balance achieved in this legend-cluster between the role of the king and that of the priests is quite remarkable. In other contexts either might be expected to claim near-divine status, but in this context they are pictured as the very human agents of the mysterious higher purpose that the worship in the temple expresses. The king might be seen as "building" the temple and "bringing" ritual knowledge and a certain amount of status with him, but the emphasis of the story is on how he in his hopeless condition as a disqualified ruler received the grace of Śivan̲ and was healed in the temple tank. The priests too might be seen as "bringing" their special ritual skills and their unusual identity and status to this place, but in the end they are the *aṭimai* or "servants" of Śivan̲, especially privileged to be able to serve in the unusual hall where the mysterious dance is performed. On balance the *Citamparamāhātmya* lets the status of the king fade to the point where Hiraṇyavarman̲ is much like any other ascetic pilgrim, while the status of the priests is carefully bolstered so that they are seen as having all the right credentials to maintain the tradition of devotion to the mysterious dancing form of Śivan̲.

This third legend-cluster very neatly completes the structure of the three parts by focusing on the very human problems involved in defining the relative status of kings and priests in the context of temple organization. In this narrative one can see that actual human figures are a mediating blend of the ideal models, which had earlier been outlined in terms of the figures of Viyākirapāta and Paṭañcali. In this story both the king and the priests are pictured sometimes as ascetic figures and at other times as devotional figures. Hiraṇyavarman̲, like so many kings in Indian stories, wants to be an ascetic and at times sounds very much like a duplicate of Viyākirapāta, but he ends up being a miraculously healed devotee giving thanks to the image of Śivan̲. The priests also claim to be an ascetic community, but unlike other ascetic communities with a single awesome leader who initiates others, these priests function as a community of equals and have as their main claim that they are the first among the devotees to have witnessed the dance. This way of structuring the text, into two discussions of ideal models and a third on the ways humans appropriate those models, allowed the author to bring up important questions of theology and ritual behavior and at the same time get around to the complex questions about the roles of kings and priests in the life of the temple. The discussion of the ideal models of worship informed the discussion of kings and priests, but those human examples did not themselves become models or ideal types that worshipers might emulate. By keeping the human problems of political jurisdiction and priestly rights within their proper realm, the author provided the tradition with a flexibility that was probably crucial to the survival of the temple in the turbulent thirteenth century. At the same time the author was able to show worshipers from a whole variety of human situations that it was in the way they chose to emulate the ideal models of Viyākirapāta and Paṭañcali in the worship of Śivan̲ that their life too would take on meaning in their particular situations.

The Kōyil Purāṇa

The *Kōyil Purāṇa* is a fourteenth-century paraphrase in Tamil̲ of the twelfth- or thirteenth-century *Citamparamāhātmya* in Sanskrit, and the content of the passages that correspond with one another in the two texts need not be discussed again. The *Kōyil Purāṇa* is, however, written by the most illustrious scholar of South Indian Śaivism, Umāpati Śivācārya, and various features of it are highly original and of considerable interest.

Umāpati began life as one of the community of priests who serve in the temple in Citamparam. As a young man, however, he became fascinated with the new religious teachings emphasizing the grace of Śivan̲, which had been set out systematically by Meykaṇṭatēvar about a century earlier and were being preached under the name Śaiva Siddhānta by a number of teachers in his day. He began traveling about with one of these teachers, and his fellow priests were not pleased. When he joined with the other young men in catching the buttermilk that fell from his teacher's hands as he ate (a traditional sign of family intimacy practiced by teachers and pupils as well), he was suspended from his priestly duties on the ground that he had been polluted by this form of intimate contact with his non-*brāhmaṇa* teacher. Umāpati himself eventually became the most renowned teacher of Śaiva Siddhānta and his treatise *Śivappirakācam* is still considered the most important systematic statement of Śaiva Siddhānta doctrine. He wrote a dozen other theological works in Tamil̲ and Sanskrit, as well as a dozen more that were devotional or historical. He was eventually welcomed back into the priesthood, and spent the latter part of his life in a *maṭam*, which is still kept just as he left it, about a mile east of the temple.[36]

As soon as one begins to read the *Kōyil Purāṇa*, one can sense why this great scholar took time to write it. For one thing he was familiar with Sanskrit and would be one of a fairly small number who would be able to provide a Tamil̲ paraphrase of the Sanskrit pamphlet on the temple legends, the *Citamparamāhātmya*, which he obviously thought highly of. At a more important level there was a nagging problem within the Śaiva Siddhānta movement for, as his own experience had shown him, the leadership of the movement was primarily non-*brāhmaṇa* and its emphasis on grace made it sound at times as if the temple rituals performed by the *brāhmaṇa* priests where not central to a religious encounter with Śivan̲. In the *Kōyil Purāṇa*, Umāpati was able to demonstrate that while he was a leading Śaiva Siddhānta theologian expounding the doctrine of *aruḷ* or grace, he was also moved, in a deeply religious sense, by the many myths and rituals associated with the image in the temple at Citamparam. Wherever he could, he provided ritual detail that was not in the *Citamparamāhātmya*, and wherever occasion provided an opportunity he used the special vocabulary of Śaiva Siddhānta to offer theological clarification.

An example of the tone of reverence in which this text is written is evident in the opening verses:

Invocation

> The unequaled feet of the elephant god Kar̲paka, who lives outside the beautiful western *kōpuram*, should be worshiped day and night by pure devotees so that they might understand these verses in praise of the golden hall in Puliyūr.

In Praise of the Dancing God

> I adore the holy little hall in the midst of the fragrant groves of *tillai* trees, where the all pervading Light dances in an open space [*veliye*] where all the world can worship and where Viṣṇu, who protects all the worlds, and Brahmā, who sits on the lotus flower, are always in attendance.
>
> I adore the holy little hall which is in Puliyūr where the houses are covered with gems and where he who spells the end of the Veda, who is himself joyous light

> beyond both material and efficient causes, and who is the embodiment of grace, dances with his heavenly lady.
>
> I adore the holy little hall where is the one who is the supreme being, the final bliss, the flawless self-realization, the rare ambrosia, the abode of joy, the gracious light, the nonseparable one, the reality of grace, and the ether which is beyond human understanding.
>
> I adore the holy little hall where one can praise the fragrant golden feet which enable mortals to feel joy; praise the hand raised in protection; praise the grace bestowed by the flowerlike face; praise the body emanating light; and praise the lotuslike foot which took me from my confused state.
> (Invocation and verses 1–4)

Umāpati's text includes a prose commentary on each of these verses, (there was a tradition of commenting on one's own writings, but there is no firm proof that others have not added to the commentary), and the commentary on the last verse is a very long exposition of Śaiva Siddhānta categories of thought. The five sentences of praise are, for instance, made to correspond with the five phases in the cosmic cycle—that is, *ciruṭṭi* (Sanskrit: *sṛṣṭi)* or creation, *titi* (Sanskrit: *stiti)* or preservation, *caṅkāram* (Sanskrit: *samhāra*) or destruction, *tirōpavam* (Sanskrit: *tirōbhava*) or concealment, and *an̲ukkirakam (Sanskrit: anugraha)* or mercy. The "confused state" is interpreted as the soul when mixed with the *āṇava malam* or ego sense, which is one of the three *malams* that keep the soul from achieving its pure state.

On the matter of the origin of the priesthood, Umāpati disagreed with the author of the *Citamparamāhātmya* so strongly that he altered the story at that point. In the *Citamparamāhātmya* it had been argued that the priests had come from North India, either from Bengal along with Hiraṇyavarman̲ or from the Antarvedī area. Umāpati argues very carefully that they are from South India and were in Citamparam along with the devotees who witnessed the first dance. In his version of the story, it was after they had won a reputation for their service of the Dancing God that Brahmā came all the way to Citamparam and begged them to go with him to the Antarvedī to assist with the greatest Vedic sacrifice of all time.[37] It was at the conclusion of this sacrifice that they were brought *back* to Citamparam along with Hiraṇyavarman̲'s court.

Upon their arrival back a most unusual incident took place, which the priests still speak of and which Umāpati as a member of the priesthood would not have wanted left out of the story. Here is his account of it:

> Then the Three Thousand arrived and went directly to Viyākirapāta and said: "O immaculate One, it is by the grace of your goodness that we have been enabled to come back. Even if Brahmā himself should come again, do not allow us to ever again leave the feet of the Lord."
>
> Then all the chariots were parked to the northwest of the sacred hall. Then at the request of the Lord each of the Three Thousand approached Viyākirapāta and was counted. One of the priests could not be found, and Hiraṇyavarman̲ became alarmed.
>
> Hiraṇyavarman̲ was in grief thinking how it would be possible to search for that virtuous one. Then Śivan̲ himself saw this and said so that all the heavenly beings

> could hear: "Each of them is like me and I am like them." Then the God who is both mother and father said: "I am one amongst them."
>
> All who heard this said: "The Lord of the Veda who dances in the Hall at Tillai is one among the knowers of the Veda." This made the king Hiraṇyavarman tremble, and he went and bowed before the feet of the priests while the gods all showered flowers on them. (verses 357–60)

In the mind of the author of the *Citamparamāhātmya* in the twelfth or thirteenth century, the question was whether the priests' could be seen to be legitimate in the eyes of the North Indian pilgrims. For Umāpati the issue of priestly authority was somewhat different. The Śaiva Siddhānta Movement to which he belonged originated in South India, and the question of his day was whether the version of Śaivism they taught could be seen to have authority in its own right. By linking the priests directly with Śivan both at the time of the dance and at the time of his declaration of a oneness with them, Umāpati provided the priests with authority on the basis of direct contact with the deity. This version of the story assisted in providing independent authority to the South Indian form of Śaivism known as Śaiva Siddhānta, and the story is now quite widely known and often quoted in arguments about the origins of South Indian Śaivism.

The *Kōyil Purāṇa* is quite a bit longer than the *Citamparamāhātmya*, partly because of the kind of refinement we have been citing but most importantly because Umāpati added two whole chapters that are totally new. One of these chapters is called the Naṭarājan chapter and is placed after the Paṭañcali chapter, and the other is the Festival chapter and is placed at the end after the Hiraṇyavarman chapter. Neither of these chapters was intended to change the narrative of the book in any way, but Umāpati felt that more descriptive material on the actual worship patterns used in the temple would be helpful to his readers. The Naṭarājan chapter describes the patterns of the regular or daily worship in the presence of the Dancing Image, and the Festival chapter describes the worship on the special or festival days of the year. Umāpati seemed a bit unsure of what he wanted to include in these chapters and he provides a lot of detail on some things and very little on others, but his purpose was, as far as I know, totally original and is the only account of worship practices in a Hindu temple that dates from as early as the fourteenth century.

The Naṭarājan chapter concentrates on the atmosphere of the "golden" hall, and the sense of expectation and excitement associated with being in the presence of the Dancing Image. Some techniques of worship are mentioned such as the calling up of special powers or *siddhas*, and the recitation of the five-syllable "name" of Śivan or the *Na-ma-Śi-va-ya*. For the most part, however, word pictures are created by describing how the Sun and the Moon, various sages, the Mūvāyiravar, and particularly the goddess, witness the dance. We are told about the bells on the feet, the twisting waist and tiger skin and the flying hair of the Dancing Image. We are then told about the crowd as Viyākirapāta and Paṭañcali join in, the Vedas are sung, all kinds of musical instruments are played, and heavenly beings, and companies of ladies and famous pilgrims all arrive. The Lord then asks Paṭañcali what boon he wishes. As excitement mounts he is overwhelmed with the favor of even being asked, but eventually asks that the Lord dance forever. Some sense of the order of the day is suggested by saying that the morning and noon dances are for the gods, the evening one for the sages and the night one for the celestial ladies, but the spontaneity of the whole is reaffirmed by saying people can come to any of these and the deity will even dance when no one is there. The Mūvāyiravar are prominent among the ascetics who are the early witnesses of the dance, but they are not really put in a priestly role and no detailed description of ceremonial bathings or other priestly activities carried out today are mentioned.[38]

The opening verses of this chapter give a clear indication of Umāpati's intention to provide a descriptive account of the tone of worship before the Dancing Image:

> After the elapse of much time they began to recalculate the auspicious time which had been suggested by the Lord. Their minds were full of ecstasy. Like the juice of sugarcane, or milk or ambrosia, so is the name of the Lord which they chanted day and night while they performed austerities and waited.
>
> The Three Thousand were waiting there expecting to witness the dance. They had been told to be there on that auspicious day to witness the dance and were anxiously looking forward to that most exquisite of auspicious moments.
>
> Like calves awaiting the return of the milk bearing cows; like the the weary bird expecting the rain of the thundering clouds; and like the flock of peacocks expecting the clouds on the mountains to shower, they all spent the days thinking about the dance of the Lord.
>
> On the day before the scheduled dance the sun approached Mount Kailas as if it knew that the Lord had left to perform the dance. It then ran through the night and rose up out of the sea near Tillai where it arrived at noon.
>
> As the sun arose everyone put two hands over his or her head in worship. From those who had come to witness the dance went up the cry: "The embodiment of Pranava, 'OM,' has arrived! The Lord of the heavenly beings has arrived! The Lord of Viṣṇu and Brahmā has arrived!" Even before any musical instruments had sounded they heard this cry and became agitated and fell to the ground. (verses 159–63)

The Festival chapter is (surprisingly) a much more accurate reflection of the present-day festival worship than the Naṭarājan̲ chapter is of daily worship. This at first appears surprising because worshipers (and often scholars too) are inclined to believe that daily worship is the ancient and inflexible pattern of worship, which has been the same throughout the centuries, and that festival worship is a relatively spontaneous and popular form, which can be changed from generation to generation. Although festival worship represents popular forms that are not as strictly governed by priestly regulation, in a much revered situation, such as Citamparam has been since the fourteenth century, the popular tradition of worship can prove the more conservative one, since there would be a public outcry against any change in a festival.[39] In any case the descriptions of the festivals in Umāpati's text correspond very closely to the festival celebrations of today.

The Festival chapter begins by telling how the sages Viyākirapāta and Patañcali convinced Hiraṇyavarman̲ to marry, and how both his marriage and his crowning were held in the temple. It then goes on to describe how he provided for the ritual needs of the temple and built beautiful homes for the Mūvāyiravar ascetics. In this context Umāpati explicitly speaks of him as "the Cōḻa king" giving his orders while "seated in the Pērampalam" (which we earlier suggested was probably originally built as a royal audience hall—see Stories 3 and 4). Umāpati clearly sees this story as the basis for the close ritual interdependence some of the Cōḻa kings had with the temple in Citamparam. Referring to what would appear to have been some kind of royal festival, he describes the king being taken in procession and then going and anointing the image of the deity. (It is at the conclusion of this ceremony that the grammar book of Pataññjali was taken in procession on the back of an elephant.) This royal festival is no longer celebrated in the temple.

A full schedule of the other annual festivals are described starting in May, the traditional New Year, and the names and dates correspond very closely with the festivals celebrated on those dates today. Among the many festivals described are the temple's major festivals held in the months of Mārkaḻi (December–January) and Āṉi (June–July), and celebrated in almost identical fashion today. The festival in Mārkaḻi is described by Umāpati as an anointing festival when water is brought from nine sacred spots for the bathing of the deity, and, as we have already seen in discussing the festival celebration of today, this bathing ceremony is still the heart of that festival today, even though it now includes many other ritual events. The festival in Āṉi is described by Umāpati as having been specifically ordered by the king, and Umāpati describes it in considerable detail:

> Then the sage told the king: "Āṉi is the month when all the gods will come and worship. The Uttiram day of Āṉi is coming near." Then the king made arrangements for conducting the festival and announced: "We are going to conduct a festival for nine days beginning on the eighteenth day of Āṉi. All the people of the world and the gods Viṣṇu and Brahmā will receive joy from the procession of the Lord, and those who bow before the images will be rid of their *malams*." He then hoisted the flag of the bull over the entranceway.
>
> Men and women of the world, along with the gods, came from all directions with ecstatic joy and the hope of ridding themselves of sin. With their hands folded, they fell down before the *kōpuram* and the beautiful streets, and then bowed before the sacred hall exhausted. When they came before the Dancing Image, they themselves began to dance and sing. . . .
>
> There were processions of elephants. There were chariots covered with gems, some of which were as tall as Mount Meru, with their yak-tailed fans, peacock feathers, and flags all touching the sky. There were poison-eyed ladies famous for their knowledge of music, many beautiful musical instruments, and dancers whose anklet bells made so much noise that they resembled the roar of many seas. . . .
>
> The procession of the Lord and the goddess with the sweet voice was taken around the streets. On the holy day of Āṉi the god who weeps and wears the fertile crescent of the sky joins in the festival. Those who worship by merging with this god, who are one in thought, have no sense of objects and have abandoned all action, their eyes will run in torrents on seeing this god. Such persons receive the grace of ecstasy, which is indestructible and has no effect other than itself. (verses 386b–396)

Umāpati concludes his discussion of festivals with a detailed account of the festival in Māci, which we included in our discussion of festivals in Story 2. He provides a detailed account of this festival, which we know had been celebrated for hundreds of years before his time. He also carefully links the symbolism of the festival with Śaiva Siddhānta theology. The mythic explanation provided for this festival is that Varuṇa the sea god had asked a teacher for military training so that he could kill a demon. When Varuṇa accidentally threw his noose over the head of the teacher and he died, Varuṇa was cursed to become a ghost with his hands and feet tied to a rope around his neck. Having suffered this way for a very long time Varuṇa cried to Śivaṉ for grace and Śivaṉ went to the seashore to offer him forgiveness. In Umāpati's account, the ropes binding Varuṇa are the bonds (*pācas*) binding the soul, and those in the crowd wait in excitement in the hope that, as they witnessed the offer of grace to Varuṇa, their bonds (*pācas*) too could be broken (see Story 2).

In these two chapters on worship before the image in the sanctuary and in the festival settings outside the temple, Umāpati has constantly used nontechnical (but clearly identifiable) Śaiva Siddhānta theological language to explain the religious implications involved.[40] His emphasis in each description is not on priestly ritual, but on the devotee's need for grace (*aruḷ*) and the emotional fervor of the soul (*pacu*), which feels the Lord (*Pati*) coming to him or her in the energy of the dance and in the breaking of the bonds (*pāca*) of finitude and sin. We will say more in the next chapter about the theological tenents of the Śaiva Siddhānta school, but what we want to note here is the innovativeness Umāpati showed in introducing these theological terms in a book of Citamparam temple legends.

As we have already seen, the Sanskrit text of *Citamparamāhātmya* was written in the twelfth or thirteenth century for North Indian pilgrims and emphasized heroic stories, which its readers might emulate, as well as the North Indian origins of the priests and their skills in doing Vedic sacrifices. The Śaiva Siddhānta school had a very different emphasis, for it had been started by a non-*brāhmaṇa* Vēḷāḷa named Meykaṇṭatēvar, who is reputed to have seen priestly ritual as sometimes distracting from the more important experience of grace. Umāpati, although a young Citamparam priest, had been attracted to the Śaiva Siddhānta teachings, but this got him into trouble and he had been disciplined by his fellow priests for associating too closely with non-*brāhmaṇas* when he drank the buttermilk spilled from his teacher's hands. After he himself became a renowned teacher of Śaiva Siddhānta, he is said to have made peace with his fellow priests and lived in a *maṭam* near the temple participating in both temple life and the propagation of Śaiva Siddhānta.

Umāpati had, in other words, achieved a mature synthesis of the two different religious tendencies with which he had associated, and it is that mature synthesis we see in the *Kōyil Purāṇa*. Here he tells the temple legends without much modification of the Sanskrit text which had probably become the standard version, except to redefine the authority of the priests in terms of their South Indian origins and their direct encounters with Śivaṉ. In two extended additions, however, he focuses in on the inner experience of the worshiper, and here he is free to define devotion in the theological language of the Śaiva Siddhānta school.

Conclusion

The legend books of Citamparam are unique in the way that they allow us to look into the local traditions of the temple at two rather early moments in its history. We have, in that sense, really three accounts of the local tradition. On the one hand, we can reconstruct from early hymns, from these two texts, and from other stray references and present-day practice what are the main features of the ongoing oral tradition as it is told to worshipers over the centuries. On the other hand, we have two fascinating snapshots of the tradition taken in two dramatically different centuries, which set that ongoing tradition within special frames of reference determined by the political and religious situation of the day.

As we have seen, the oral tradition of a temple normally dealt with the question as to why a temple was in this place. Although in answering this question, it was common for temple legends to emphasize the uniqueness of the natural setting, the legends of Citamparam succeed in an unusual degree in using the symbol of the "*tillai* forest" to give the temple a reputation as a sacred place outside of the domain of any particular human civilization. While outside the domain of any particular civilization, the dance in the sacred hall of the temple, on the other hand, came to be thought of as "centering" the cosmos. Kings and sages sought to associate themselves with the place in order that their work might take on the transcending legitimacy with which the place had come to be associated. The *Citamparamāhātmya* as a guidebook for North Indian pilgrims expands the story of the *tillai* forest so that a normal worship experience in Citamparam becomes a pilgrimage involving "separation" from the structures of society, engagement in "communitas" with others in that most unusual place, and a "reentry" back into family life and new forms of society.[41] Viyākirapāta and Hiraṇyavarmaṉ both undergo these crises in the pilgrim way and serve as mythic and human models for the pilgrim worshiper. The *Kōyil Purāṇa,* on the other hand, focuses on the worship at the feet of the Dancing Image, and the emphasis in this case is on remaining centered and never leaving this unique and special place. Here it is Paṭañcali who serves as an example of one so taken up in ecstasy that this place becomes the only place on earth for him.

The deity in South Indian temples is almost always described as unique to that place, and local worshipers come to think of the divine in terms of a very specific and identifiable personality. In this sense Citamparam had from the beginning the special presence of the deity associated with the joyful *ānanda tāṇḍava* dance. As the stories emphasize, this dance was awesome in its perfection and cosmic implications, but it was also joyful (especially in contrast to the *ūrdhva tāṇḍava,* which shook the cosmos and subdued Kāḷi), and the worshiper is drawn close to the deity as he or she joins with the goddess Umā in being a "witness" to the dance. To encounter the divine in Citamparam is in this sense to know the power that stirs the cosmos and determines the cosmic cycle, and is at the same time to be intimately involved with the joyful presence of the divine couple.

The saints or renowned worshipers in any temple are always composites of the many worshipers who are attracted to the place. In the case of Citamparam, the popular tradition had probably quite early focused on the story of the snake-human Paṭañcali, who discovered the secret of the way to this place and, with wrenching emotional joy, waited to witness the dance. The ascetic ideal had, however, also been attached quite early to the religious specialists who lived in Tigertown, and as the reputation of the temple grew and the pilgrim experience began to involve worshipers from some distance, the ascetic dimension of the pilgrim ideal became a more and more important aspect of the worship experience of many. The example of Viyākirapāta's ascetic discipline is explained by the priests and guides of today as if it is the natural consequence of many days alone on the pilgrim way or in the isolation of a *tillai* forest. In such circumstances one naturally gains a familiarity with tigers and an ability to perform the daring and demanding feats that the story of Viyākirapāta exhibits.

Finally, over time one of the great attractions of the temple had come to be knowledge that kings had spent much time there. The original stories of kings must have been based on more or less true stories, and must have been mostly about Cōla kings who were directly involved with the temple over five centuries. King stories are, however, difficult for a temple tradition to handle in that they tend to reflect a particular time and space, and the worshiping community soon outgrows them. By keeping to the rule that a model worshiper should be a composite figure with a variety of traits, the legend of Hiraṇyavarman allowed the temple tradition to incorporate its rich heritage of contact with royalty into its models of worship without linking itself too closely with a particular political affiliation.

When we turn from the ongoing tradition to the two specific texts that recorded that tradition at two different moments in time, we find that the legends tell us not only what the ordinary worshipers' concerns were, but also what the specific concerns of specific worshipers were. In the case of the Sanskrit text or the *Citamparamāhātmya,* we have argued that these specific concerns were those of North Indian pilgrim worshipers who were probably most numerous during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The subconscious or implicit concern of these worshipers would no doubt be whether they would feel at home and whether they would understand the worship, and the text reassures them on that score by linking the figures of the ongoing tradition with familiar names and stories from their own tradition. At the same time it dealt with the two explicit concerns they had about the somewhat subordinate role of the *liṅkam* worship ritual with which they were most familiar, and the fact that the priest might not have the lineage and ordination that they as North Indians would consider proper. By addressing these questions, the author was probably hoping to use the local traditions not as they are usually used, as immediate stimuli to worship, but as inducements to make the pilgrimage in the first place, and as preliminary preparation for what would be a somewhat new worshiping experience.

In the case of the *Kōyil Purāṇa* written by Umāpti in the fourteenth century, the audience was somewhat different. The end of the thirteenth century had seen the final collapse of the different Hindu kingdoms of the South and the beginning of the fourteenth century had witnessed the march of Muslim armies through the South as well. Contact with North India was no longer so extensive and the continuation of the many temple traditions of the area was in doubt. A new religious alternative was available in that the Śaiva Siddhānta teachers were propounding a form of Śaiva faith that built on the old hymn-singing tradition but was relatively independent of particular temple traditions. By presenting the Citamparam tradition and the Śaiva Siddhānta faith to the public in the same text, Umāpati was demonstrating how temple practice and the newly formulated faith might be combined to form the basis of a renewed culture. His formula appears to have had considerable success, for in spite of the political chaos of his day both temple practice and Śaiva Siddhānta faith continued to serve as complementary dimensions of the resilient South Indian cultural heritage that emerged from the uncertainties of his time.

Citamparam seems to be unique in having written versions of its legendary traditions recorded at this relatively early phase in its history. Most important South Indian temples have rich oral legends and the antiquity of some of those can be verified by hymnodic or inscriptional references such as those available in Citamparam, but these two beautifully thought-through written texts are the products of two very creative individuals responding to special circumstances in their day. The fact that both individuals were dealing with unprecedented political crises arising out of the conquests of Muslim armies (the twelfth century in North India and the fourteenth in South India) and the total collapse of the political system as they had known it probably accounts for the necessity they felt to put their views down in writing so that worshipers at some distance might become acquainted with the worship system of which they were speaking. At the same time it was not the political system that served to focus their attention, for they were each personally stirred by a profound theological perspective, which they wanted to share with their fellow worshipers. In this sense these texts have an existential dimension, which is quite rare in Indian literature, much of which was produced by the literary class in the course of carrying out their various duties. Although few of the present-day worshipers in Citamparam have read these texts, they know about them and frequently mention the "great literature" that is part of the tradition of worship in which they are proud to participate.

Notes

1. Of course, in modern circumstances entrepreneurs cannot resist a temptation, and temple bookshops carry "publications" that are usually even less reliable than the notorious "guides" around the temple entrances. For instance there is the work by Sastracharya, Panditha, Raja Somasekhara Dikshitar (1969) *The History of Chidambaram, Sri Nataraja's Temple (A Guide to Sri Nataraja Temple)*, translated into English by Kumary R. Sasikala, edited and published by Vyakarna Katya Vedanta Mimamsa Siromani Panditha Raja, Soma Sethu Dikshitar, a research scholar in Sanskrit, and vice-president of Suhrt Sabha (Chidambaram). This volume costs Rs. 1.50.

2. Most of these seventeenth-century texts have been republished in a series called *South Indian Templesites* published in Śrīraṅkam by Vani Vilas Press.

3.. The text used here was *Citamparamāhātmya* (1968).

4. The date for Umāpati is one of the most reliable in the whole religious history of South India because he himself in his introduction to the work *Cankarpanirākaraṇam* did the highly uncommon thing of saying that it was finished in Śaka 1236 which corresponds to 1313 C.E.

5. The text used here was published by Sri Mahalinkasuvami Tēvastānam (1968) in Tiruvitaimarutūr.

6. "Tillai," for instance, in the *Tiruvācakam* alone is mentioned in hymns II, III, XII, XIII, XXXI, L; and for other hymn writers too it is the favorite name of the "place" where the Dancing God resides.

7. *Tiruvācakam* II.140 and II.145 are early examples.

8. Sastri (1935) 1975, p. 677) wonders if the thirteenth-century author of the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam* named Perumpaṟṟappuliyūr Nambi had been initiated into some special order during his stay in Citamparam, but he seems to conclude that it may just indicate "his devotion to Naṭarāja." The frequency with which one meets the name in inscriptions would seem to indicate that it was widely used to indicate one devoted to Naṭarājaṉ. A suburb of Citamparam took the name in the thirteenth century, and dozens of inscriptions described the monasteries and gardens being built for the devotees who wanted to live there.

9. See the different variations on this myth discussed in Shulman 1980, pp. 215–221.

10. See, for example, Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam* II.138 perhaps from the fifth century, and Kaṇṭarātitya's *Tiruvicaippā*, verse 6, from the tenth century.

There is a question, of course, as to what the connection is between the use of the name "Paṭañcali" in this context and the temple tradition, which says that the priestly initiation and priestly ritual are derived from the grammarian Paṭañjali (Sanskrit spelling retained for him). The priests say there is no connection, but certainly in the mind of the public there has been some link. Given that the Snake-Man devotee is mentioned as early as the fifth century, it would seem to be a very independent tradition.

11. A sculptural representation of Paṭañcali is found, for instance, on the base of the west *kōpuram*, which is the oldest of the four gateway towers and was built in the twelfth century.

In addition in the twelfth century a whole temple to Paṭañcali, called Anantīcuvaraṉ, was built to the west of the main temple. This temple was carefully studied by Balasubramanyam (1943, 1944).

12. The reference to Citamparam being at the "center" of the universe is an important part of this story.

In fourteenth-century theological writing, the centering indicated that Citamparam was in some special way where attributes gave way to *cit* or consciousness, or where the *ākāśa* (ether), *dahara* (subtle), *puṇḍarīka* (lotus heart), or *rahacya* (secret) resided.

In the temple one hears somewhat more literal explanations. Temple priests explain that the "center" was the "heart" of the *mahāpuruṣa* or primal man as it was laid northwest to southeast across the temple plan (cf. Kramrisch (1946) 1976 chap. 3). A temple "guide" explained the concept in terms of geography, and tried to demonstrate that Citamparam was the midpoint between the east coast of Śrī Laṅka and the west coast of South India.

13. Inscription *ARE* 1934–35, 105, which was issued in 1261, for instance, has a detailed account of a devotee from Bengal (Southern Rāḍhā) who purchased land and hired gardeners so that he could make a perpetual donation of flowers to the deity.

14. Swamy (1977) discusses this custom, but makes the inexcusable mistake of saying that it was a custom started in about the fifteenth century. He failed to recall the frequent references to sacred trees in famous temples such as Citamparam with its *tillai* trees or Tiruvaṉaikkā temple with its Jampu trees.

15. See, for instance, Parkhill 1980.

16. There are no early hymns that I know of that mention Viyākirapāta, nor is his sculpture found on the early or west *kōpuram*. On the other hand, the renovations that took place in the second *pirakāram* or walkway in the eighteenth or nineteenth century produced quite a few sculptures of Viyākirapāta, indicating that, by that time, he had become a popular

object of devotion or inspiration. In this connection it is important to note that the very new sculpture panel (dedicated in the 1970s) in the first *pirakāram,* which has Patañcali, Viyākirapāta, and another sage named Jaimini, is not as old as the *pirakāram* in which it was placed.

17. The name Puliyūr or Tigertown is, for instance, used in all the early hymns, which would be at least five hundred years earlier than the text under discussion.

18. This version of the history of Kāḷi worship is recounted today by devotees of the goddess as well as by those opposed to her worship, but it is not easy to find literary evidence in support of it because it is obviously a matter of some delicacy, which ancient literature would naturally avoid. The inscriptional evidence in support of this version of history is quite complete in that there are many references to Kāḷi worship in Citamparam in the early inscriptions, and the building of the Kāḷi temple outside of town in the thirteenth century involved more than a dozen separate inscriptions. It is also widely known that village temples of Kāḷi (but not the one outside of Citamparam) still involve worship with meat and liquor.

19. Inscription *ARE* 1903, 401, describes the building of this temple when it records a sale of land in 1250 to Kōpperuñciṅkan͟'s agent Cōlakōn͟ in order to make possible the building of the temple to Piṭāri (Kāḷi). There are a dozen other inscriptions on the walls indicating the continued support of this ruler. The temple as it stands is a fine example of a thirteenth-century temple. The small shrines on the outside walls or *dēvakosthas* all contain images of goddesses; with Rudrānī on the north, Brahmanī on the east, and Dakṣinamurtinī on the south. The shrines on the entranceway or *antarāla* have Durgā on the north and Saraswatī on the south. The pillars of the front hallway have fine sculptures, and a sculpture of the emaciated saint lady Kāraikāl Ammā is especially striking. The temple faces west and the central image is called Brahmācāmuṇḍīsvarī and is described by the priest as "Kāḷi in a form that was cooled down as Brahmā read the Vedas to her." The image most often worshiped today, however, is a still fiery Kāḷi in a special shrine crowded into the northwest corner of the front hallway where she faces east. The temple is served by a family of Dīṭcitar priests who also serve in the temple of Naṭarājan͟, and a family of Vēḷāḷa *stānikas* who live on the temple grounds and play a significant part in the ritual.

20. This tank is now in considerable disrepair, but can still be dated in the thirteenth century on stylistic grounds.

21. *Mahābhārata* XIII.14ff. is mostly about Upamanyu rather than his father. Upamanyu's story is further expanded on in the *Śiva Purāṇa* (1970, vol. 3, pp. 1450ff., vol 4, pp. 1899ff.), where he is a young ascetic still looking for the "ocean of milk," but is also a most revered follower of Śivan͟ entrusted with the task of instructing Kṛṣṇa. If the *Śiva Purāṇa* is itself compiled about the twelfth century that may indicate that the story was a current favorite, and it may have been for that reason that it found its way into the *Citamparamāhātmya* in the thirteenth century.

22. In the inscriptions quoted in the previous chapter that compare the king with Śivan͟, the later is described in a very domestic way as seated with his two wives by his side. The Somaskantan͟ image of Śivan͟, Umā, and the baby Murukan͟ is probably the most common image of Śivan͟ in South India.

23. It is a Somaskantan͟ image that is carried in the regular festival processions in Citamparam and in other Śaiva temples as well.

24. This story is told at great length in the collection of "saints lives" originally compiled by Cuntarar in the eighth century and rewritten by Nampi in the tenth and Cēkkiḻār in the twelfth.

25. *Śiva Purāṇa* I.5.

26. See O'Flaherty 1973, chap. 6, for all the variant versions. For the even better known

theme of Viṣṇu's switch into the Mōhinī form, see, for instance, the Churning of the Ocean myth in *Rāmāyaṇa* I.45 and elsewhere.

27. See, for example, Hart 1975.

28. See Hardy 1983.

29. *Tiruvācakam* II.138.

30. The most popular story of this kind is that which explains the Lingōdbhava sculpture. That sculpture represents Viṣṇu in the form of a boar trying to find the bottom of the *liṅkam*, and Brahmā in the form of a bird trying to find the top. When they fail, the *liṅkam* splits open and the full image of Śivaṉ is seen.

31. *Mahābhārata* I.5.

32. Inscription *ARE* 1934–35, 105, describes the man buying a flower garden as Gangōli Tirucciṟṟampalamuṭaiyār also known as Uṭaiyār Iśvaraśivar of the Brāhman *gōtra* Sāvarṇṇa and resident in South Rādhā (modern Bengal). The names on quite a few other inscriptions sound Bengali, but this one is very explicit.

33. See, for instance, Māṇikkavācakar's *Tiruvācakam* XXXI.23; Appar I.5; II.8; V.6; and Campantar I.1; I.2.

34. The roles Smārta Brāhmaṇas or Sāstrikaḷ are given in the temple rituals as they are carried out today in Citamparam was discussed in Story 1.

35. See Fuller 1984 for an account of how these discussions continue in the present.

36. The life stories of Umāpati and other Śaiva Siddhānta teachers are all retold in *Santāvārya Purāṇa* of Swami Natha Desikar of the eighteenth century. Pope (1900, p. xciii) quotes from *The Traditional History of Umāpathi Śivācāriyar,* which appears to be an older work. The phrase quoted in both these sources and in oral accounts of the priests today is the one the teacher threw out as a challenge when he saw Umāpati being carried in grandeur. He said to his own disciples: "There goes a man blind in the daylight," and Umāpati's conscience was awakened, and he immediately joined the other disciples.

37. As we will note shortly, the whole of the third chapter or the Naṭarājaṉ chapter is new with Umāpati. It is at the end of this chapter (verses 213ff.) that he introduces this discussion of Brahmā coming to Citamparam to beg the priests to go with him to the Antarvedī. The assumption when they are mentioned earlier in the story (verses 160, 182) is, of course, that their home is in Citamparam.

In the fourth chapter, called the Hiraṇyavarmaṉ chapter, he resumes the paraphrasing of the *Citamparamāhātmya* and does not mention the priests at all when he describes the arrival of the king and his court in Citamparam where they are greeted by Viyākirapāta and Paṭañcali (verses 229–336). In verse 346 he seems to echo the position of the *Citamparamāhātmya* that the priests came with the king, and in 347 that they came from the Antarvedī. The uncertainty of the story in these verses is then made up by the eloquent conclusion to the chapter starting at verse 357 where the deity's voice is heard claiming oneness with the priests.

The fact that the closing verses of the Naṭarājaṉ chapter and the Hiraṇyavarmaṉ chapter respectively make the special points about the status of the priests might seem to indicate that these sections were rewritten in order to strengthen this point.

38. In his Sanskrit poem, Śrī *Kuñcitāṅghristavaḥ*, which we will cite in Story 6, Umāpati does provide a bit more detail on the daily ritual. Perhaps he unconsciously distinguished the Sanskritic daily ritual of the priests from the festival legends he would think of as belonging to the Tamil-speaking public.

39. I have found this conservatism about festival worship not only in Citamparam but in other temples, such as Śrīraṅkam, where inscriptions of seven hundred years ago indicate that the processions still go on the same routes on the same days today as they did then. See Younger 1982a, 1982c.

40. As an example we might cite verse 138 early in the Naṭarājan̲ chapter:

> Then the Lord, because of grace [*aruḷ*], wished to give them some teaching and said: *Jñāna* [wisdom] is my place of residence. Those who are inseparably one with me abide in *cit* [consciousness] and *sat* [truth] without ever leaving the earth. Just as the soul pervades the body, even so do I pervade the soul.

41. The structure is in some ways quite close to the universal structure of pilgrimage spelled out by Turner and Turner 1978.

Story 6

The Hymns of the Saints and the Śaiva Schools

There are many hymns about Citamparam scattered through the different branches of Śaiva tradition in South India. These hymns record the personal reflections of the many poet-saints who have visited the temple over the centuries, and they are usually preserved by those who share the religious interests of the authors. In many cases the earliest of the hymns were included in the canon that was developed by the Śaiva Siddhānta school, but even then they remain part of the particular saint's contribution to Śaiva thought, and their impact on the Citamparam tradition as such must be reconstructed on the basis of everything known about the developing Śaiva tradition.

In a general way it can be said that the traditions of the Citamparam temple are tied in with those of the branch of Hindu religion known as Śaivism, but Śaivism itself was, of course, an evolving frame of reference with different meanings in different periods of history. Śaivism eventually became the largest single branch of Hinduism, but that preeminence is the end product of many different currents in religious history, and Śaivism was in no sense the dominant force in much of that history. Worship of youthful male deities such as Murukaṉ and Ayyappaṉ, and of innumerable goddesses, probably preceded the worship of Śivaṉ in the South of India. In North India other deities and even sages are pictured in stories as making fun of the hunter and recluse Śivaṉ, and the two great dynasties of the Mauryans and Guptas sponsored the rival religious systems of the Buddhists and the Vaiṣṇavas respectively. Śaivism survived and gradually developed only by associating itself with other early forms of worship, by winning the grudging acknowledgment of *brāhmaṇa* scholars and mythmakers, and by gaining the support of local rulers in different regions.[1] In the South of India, Śaivism seems to have gradually absorbed other religious traditions. For example Śivaṉ came to be seen as the father of the popular Murukaṉ, and as the consort or husband of the many goddesses. This process of absorption goes back to a very early time and by the beginning of the common era Śaivism was one of the major players in the religious scene of South India.

Active sectarian rivalry emerged in South India only when a number of regional centers began to develop a wider spread of cultural influence and absorb the local tribal and village cultures that prevailed earlier.[2] In the region of Maturai, where the Pāṇṭya kingdom emerged, Murukaṉ worship appears to have been the early favorite,[3] but there was also evidence of goddess worship, which later became very prominent with the emergence of the princess-goddess Mīṉāṭci (Sanskrit: Mīnākṣī), and there were prominent voices in favor of Vaiṣṇavism, Buddhism, and Jainism as well. In the midst of this situation Śaivism somehow managed to become associated with both Murukaṉ and the goddess, and during the early centuries of the common era a whole Maturai Śaiva tradition emerged telling of the sixty-four *viḷaiyāṭal* ("tricks") Śivaṉ played in bringing his grace to individuals. The great hymns of Māṇikkavācakar brought this Maturai stream of Śaiva tradition to the center in Citamparam.[4] In the region of Kāñcīpuram, where the Pallava kingdom developed, the strong merchant community seems to have initially lent most of its support to Buddhist and Jaina monasteries, but Śaiva ascetics seem to have been prominent there too. After the king Mahendravarmaṉ was converted from Jainism to Śaivism, when he witnessed the miracles of the saint Appar, the Pallava kings gave their support to Śaiva temples.[5] In the Kāvēri River valley, between these two urban areas, the initial spread of the Śaiva faith seems to have been sponsored primarily by the Vēḷāḷa agriculturalists who incorporated the locally popular goddess traditions into their understanding of Śaivism.[6]

Up until the ninth century Citamparam was not thought of as belonging completely to any one of these three regions, for it lay in a relatively undeveloped area along the coast which adjoined them all. Probably partly because of this independent position, it gradually emerged as *the* center of Śaivism to which all the regions turned for both religious and political legitimacy. For our purposes it is not important to know exactly when the temple in Citamparam became the center for Śaiva legitimacy in South India, but it is important to understand the different religious sensitivities and theological emphases of the saints and teachers who sought to associate themselves with the place. A definitive history of Śaivism in South India has yet to be written, and as a result dates for the major figures are often in dispute, and there is not a generally recognized sense of the relative impact different movements made on the history as a whole. In the discussion that follows we will try to resist the guessing game on dates that Western scholars and Western-trained scholars tend to engage in, and try to take up the different figures who wrote hymns on Citamparam, at least initially, more or less as the Śaiva tradition viewed them, and see if that provides us with a credible understanding of the impact they had on the Citamparam tradition.

Seeing the Śaiva tradition from the perspective of Citamparam, it clearly breaks down into four phases. The first and most important phase involves the "Early Expressions of Faith" when each of three quite different traditions of Śaivism brought its formulation of the faith to Citamparam. These three traditions were the *cittar* tradition of Tirumūlar, the mystical devotionalism of Māṇikkavācakar, and the peasant enthusiasm of the *Tēvāram* singers Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar, none of which show any knowledge of the other. The second phase was the "Court-Sponsored Forms of Faith" when the Cōḻa Empire sought to organize the religious life of its realm and make Citamparam the institutional focus of Śaiva tradition. The third phase developed as the Cōḻa power declined and "Theologically Formulated Expressions of Faith" became the norm by which the tradition was defined. In this context Citamparam was forced to bring its tradition into line with streams of Śaiva orthodoxy defined in terms of Sanskritic canons and in terms of the texts of the Śaiva Siddhānta school. The fourth phase, which in many ways continues, is characterized by "Philosophical Reflections on the Dancing God." Initially a product of the widespread popularity of the Vedānta philosophy, this phase continued in a more open philosophical atmosphere over the centuries. The hymns of the saints represented here can properly be seen as a part of the religious history of these four periods of time. They are, however, just as often taken collectively and in any sequence as "the Citamparam tradition of Śaivism," or as responses to the experience of encountering Lord Naṭarājaṉ. Their testimony is in this sense our most personal record of the religious experience associated with the Citamparam temple.

"Early Expressions of Faith": The Three Streams

Tirumūlar

Tirumūlar is the author of the much revered Śaiva meditation manual known as the *Tirumantiram*. The traditional accounts of his life hold that he was a North Indian *yogi* or *cittar* who came to the South and through a miracle entered into the body of a shepherd boy named Mūlar. The *Tirumantiram* text is a highly unusual treatise in nine *tantras* or lessons of graduated difficulty for the sake of adepts in meditation. The text is divided into three thousand verses and individual verses are often memorized and quoted out of context. (The number almost certainly has an esoteric meaning here and in the case of the numbering of the three thousand ascetic priests of Citamparam, but thus far the meaning of the number has not been explained.) Fairly late in his treatise Tirumūlar turns his attention to the Dancing Image of Citamparam and in an eighty-verse exposition develops an elaborate theological interpretation of the image.

> Transcendent light is the auspicious dancer,
> Supreme bliss is the beautiful dancer,
> The dancer in the golden city, the dancer of Tillai,
> The dancer of wonder. Who can know him?[7]
> (verse 2723)

> The *vedas* danced, the great *ākamams* danced,
> The hymns danced, the seven planets danced,
> The primeval creatures danced, the whole universe danced,
> When the Lord danced and made the sound.
> (verse 2729)

> After dancing for the souls, he danced all nine dances,
> He danced in the cremation ground, and also in the heart,
> He danced in the spinal cord where the three nerves meet,
> And he made possible saving knowledge. What a sound!
> (verse 2736)

Devotees concentrate their minds on the golden feet
Of the One who dances in Citamparam. They sob in joy.
They become startled, spasmodically fall down and shiver.
They forget themselves and their faculties are numbed.
(verse 2744)

I searched and discovered within myself the sacred dance,
The feet adorned with tinkling anklets,
The mouth singing songs and the limbs moving.
O how my sufferings disappear!
(verse 2760)

When one sees a tamarind the mouth waters,
So it is with those who witness the dance.
They shed tears of joy and melt with love,
Blissful joy arises in their hearts.
(verse 2778)

Finally, reaching the climax of his eighty-verse hymn on the dance, Tirumūlar sets out in three verses the two primary formulas of Śaiva meditation, the *pañcāṭcaram* or five-syllable meditation on the name of Śivan̲, and the *pañcakiruttiyam* or five-part cosmic cycle that the dance is seen to symbolize.

The hand waving the drum says "*Śi*" or "fie,"
The pointing arm says "*va*" or "come,"
In the hand upraised there is the question "*ya*" or "when,"
The fire is "*na*" or negative,
And the foot is "*ma*" or veiling.
(verse 2797)

That which holds the drum; That which is flung across;
That which points up; That which holds fire;
And that which treads on the cause of evil;
Know that these represent the subtle *ŚI-VA-YA-NA-MA*!
(verse 2798)

The drum of God [in the far right hand] is creation;
The quieting [near right] hand preservation;
The fire [in the far left hand] is destruction;
The firm standing posture [on the demon] is nothingness;
And the uplifted [left] foot is recreating grace.
(verse 2799)

In these verses Tirumūlar supplies us with vivid descriptions of the trancelike behavior of the worshipers, esoteric or yogic interpretations of the inner states of the worshiper, and formulas that allow the worshiper to recall elaborate theological systems associated with the deity. These verses represent such an incredibly rich interpretation of the entire Citamparam worship system that some modern scholars have on that basis alone raised the question as to whether Tirumūlar can possibly have come as early in the tradition as the tradition itself has held. The evolutionary bias that holds that the best ideas are always the most recent ideas is, however, not always a good guide in discussing ancient religious traditions. In any case our interest in Tirumūlar is not so much in establishing his date as it is in taking note of what we will call the "yogic" interpretation of the worship tradition of Citamparam, which he presents.

From the earliest records right down to the present, worship in Citamparam has been referred to as having a mysterious and apparently somewhat esoteric or secret meaning. While it would be difficult to demonstrate that Tirumūlar has been responsible for this reputation in that his verses are seldom quoted directly, there is an interesting correspondence in terms of the awe in which the tradition holds him and the awe associated with the worship system of Citamparam. Throughout its history, the reputation of the temple for esoteric mystery was associated with the community of Mūvāyiravar or Three Thousand ascetics who live and serve in the temple, and they were specifically called *cittars* in the descriptions of the seventh-century saints Appar and Campantar.[8] They, however, eventually came to be associated with all strains of tradition in the temple, and it was Tirumūlar, as the legendary *cittar* with ties to North India and the "yoga" tradition, who served as the primary symbol of the esoteric dimension of the worship.

The role of the *pañcāṭcaram* and the *pañcakiruttiyam* in the tradition of Śaiva worship needs to be commented on. If it is credible to accept the idea that these two formulas are being introduced by Tirumūlar here for the first time, then we would be justified in interpreting them as part of the esoteric tradition. In some ways that seems quite acceptable for they are indeed formulas for meditation that are not apparent in the image itself and were certainly first introduced from some school of esoteric thought. The only reason we now feel hesitant about this interpretation is that, in the course of the tradition, these formulas have became universally recognized worship patterns, which are now fully assimilated into the mainstream or exoteric tradition. The *pañcāṭcaram* or the chanting of the five-syllable "name" of Śivan̲ is something one now encounters at every Śivan̲ temple and every form of festival or family worship. The *pañcakiruttiyam* is more like a summation of a theological theory on cyclical cosmology where creation (*ciruṭṭi*), preservation (*titi*), destruction (*caṅkāram*), nothingness (*tirōpavam*), and recreating grace (*an̲ukkirakam*) are thought to follow one after another. In the *yuga* theory of the Sanskrit *purāṇas*, the cosmic cycle can be interpreted in a number of ways, some of which are theistic and some not, but in the Śaiva theology being set forth by Tirumūlar the cycle is in the hands of Śivan̲, and it is really his cosmic lordship that is being set forth. While the *pañcakiruttiyam* is a somewhat less well known formula than the *pañcāṭcaram*, it is still widely known among Śaivas and has over time become a recognized part of the mainstream tradition.

Māṇikkavācakar

If Tirumūlar introduced a note of esoteric or "yogic" meditation from North India into the worship of Citamparam, Māṇikkavācakar brought a rather different kind of mysticism from the worship traditions of Maturai in the Pāṇṭya kingdom to the south. Śaiva tradition held that Māṇikkavācakar lived in the fifth century when the Pāṇṭya kings were flourishing, Buddhism was thriving, and the complex social and cultural changes that accompanied the Cōl̲a rise to power were yet to take place.[9]

G. U. Pope, the Englishman who translated Māṇikkavācakar's hymns into English, dismissed the traditional biographies totally and suggested a later date.[10] Some scholars have followed Pope, but there is little basis for settling the issue conclusively.[11] Our present purpose does not require that the issue be settled, for our main point is to develop the implications of the remarkable fact that none of the three systems of early Śaivism mention the others. The obvious implication of this fact would seem to be that the systems of Tirumūlar, Māṇikkavācakar, and the peasant hymn singers Campantar, Appar, and Cuntarar originally developed as three separate systems of Śaiva thought, which had little or no influence on one another's origin. If it is the case that no one of these three systems is derived from the others, then it is not important to know what their absolute dates of origin were.

There is a wealth of colorful material from a variety of sources on the life of Māṇikkavācakar. There are, for example, frequent autobiographical references in his hymns; there is a well-developed tradition of Śaiva stories associated with Maturai called the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇa* with Māṇikkavācakar featured in four of the sixty-four stories; and there is an entire biography called the *Vātavūr Purāṇa*. The *Vātavūr* tradition appears as if it might depend for the most part on the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal*, but the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal* tradition itself appears to be old, to correlate well with the autobiographical references in the hymns and to be an independent tradition unrelated to any school of Māṇikkavācakar followers.[12]

The initial story-cluster connected with Māṇikkavācakar describes him as coming from a *brāhmaṇa* family in the village of Vātavūr and going on to become a minister in the court of the Pāṇṭya king Arimarttaṉaṉ. One day the king entrusted a sum of money with Māṇikkavācakar and sent him to the coast to buy horses, which were to be shipped in. On the way Māṇikkavācakar went to the temple in Tirupperuntuṟai and met a sage with whom he stayed until all his money was used up in worship. Summoned back by the king, he was fearful, but the sage urged him to go and in a miracle a pack of jackals were turned into the desired horses. The king was delighted, but after some time the "horses" reverted to jackals again, and the king was angry and ordered that Māṇikkavācakar should be tortured by, among other things, standing in the dried up river bed of the Vaikai River. Śivaṉ then sent down torrential rains and the Vaikai River through the city of Maturai was flooded. The king ordered every family to do dike repair work, and an old widow was forced to hire a passing laborer to do her share. When the laborer fell asleep in the afternoon sun the king came and beat him with a stick only to find that the laborer was the god Śivaṉ in disguise.[13] Māṇikkavācakar's career as a Pāṇṭya minister was not destined to last, but the stories about his time as a minister are important not only in themselves but because they also explain the versatility and skill of his poetry, his links with earlier Maturai traditions of erotically expressed devotion, and his fascination for elegant and courtly images.

The second cluster of stories connected with Māṇikkavācakar places him in Citamparam. When the king Cakanāta replaced his father on the Pāṇṭya throne, he gave Māṇikkavācakar permission to fulfill his long-felt wish to go to Citamparam. Once he arrived there, the local king enlisted him in an elaborate debate that had been set up with some Buddhist scholars who had been brought there by a visiting Śrī Laṅka king. The debate itself was inconclusive, but when Māṇikkavācakar was

Māṇikkavācakar image (in small village shrine near Kāḷi temple)

challenged to heal the daughter of the Śrī Laṅka king who was dumb, he was successful and all concerned were converted to Śaivism. Māṇikkavācakar then settled down in a retreat near Citamparam and wrote his two great works, the *Tirukkōvaiyār* and *Tiruvācakam*.

The lesser of the two works is the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, which uses a very elaborate poetic formula to express the special kind of erotic mystical devotion Māṇikkavācakar taught. The *kōvai* was a poetic exercise used by sophisticated Tamil̲ poets in which the poet is obliged to compose one verse in each of the possible modes that literary convention prescribed for one lover to address another. Court poets were sometimes asked to compose a *kōvai* in praise of the king. In the *Tirukkōvaiyār* the devotee is cast in the male role and "he" uses very erotic language to praise the goddess, who in the context of these verses receives the praise on behalf of the Dancing Lord of whom she is a part. The mystical "oneness" of devotee, goddess, and god is beautifully expressed in these verses without taking away from the highly erotic character of the imagery.

The *Tiruvācakam* is a justly famous work, which expresses the emotional longing of the mystic soul for god in some of the most beautiful verses ever written. Unlike the *Tirukkōvaiyār*, the *Tiruvācakam* is a composite work of fifty-one hymns which vary greatly in length, poetic meter, and even in the way they formulate the mystic approach. Some scholars have tried to account for the arrangement of the whole by seeing in the different hymns an autobiographical record of the progress of the mystic soul,[14] but that suggestion can be true only in the most general sense for each of the hymns bears the mark of a great poet's constant reworking and refining in an effort to make words reveal the deepest struggles of the longing heart.

The opening hymn provides a worship setting for the whole hymnbook by placing the author at the feet of the Lord in Citamparam.

> Hail, the five letters! Hail, foot of the Lord!
> Hail, foot of Him Who not for an instant quits my heart![15]
>
> . . . .
>
> Because He, Śivaṉ, within my thought abides,
> By His grace alone, bowing before His feet,
> With joyous thought, Śivaṉ's "Ways of Old" I'll tell
> That thus my former "deeds" may wholly pass.
>
> . . . .
>
> Truly, seeing Thy golden feet this day, I've gained release.
>
> . . . .
>
> Lord who dost dance, trampling dense darkness down!
> Dancer in Tillai! Dweller in the Southern Pāṇṭya land!
> Thou Who dost cut off evil birth! Adoring ever, Thee they name,
> Whom words declare not; then, 'neath Thy sacred feet
> They learn the meaning of their song. The blessed ones
> In Śivaṉ's town who dwell, —full many a one, —beneath
> The feet of Śivaṉ, lowly bending utter praise.
>
> (I)

The most autobiographical of all the hymns is the second one. There Māṇikkavācakar explicitly relates the deity of Citamparam to the various events in his life. He also mentions the model devotee, Paṭañcali, who, we have already argued in Story 5, was the model used in the local Citamparam legends for the erotic and emotional type of mystic devotion expressed by Māṇikkavācakar. The wealth of detail the hymn contains both about his former life in Maturai and the local traditions of Citamparam lends the worship an emotional depth that is a special feature of the Maturai tradition of poetry and hymnody going back to classical times and found in, for instance, the *Kalittokai*.[16]

> The sacred foot that danced in Tillai's city old
> Is his, Who in all varied lives has energized;
>
> . . . .
>
> In goodness jackals into horses made,
> To make him His, He of the sacred foot,
> The charges to the Pāṇṭyan sold,
> Nor deigned to take the heaped-up gold.
> Our King made me His slave, and in the path of grace to keep,
> Made manifest the ancient brightening ray.
> Becoming a Brāhman, graciously making me His own,
> He showed the magic illusion.
> Coming to Maturai, the city great and fair,
> He became a horses' groom.
> And therein too, for the female devotee
> He condescended to carry earth.
>
> . . . .

> Me, cur, in Tillai filled with good,
> He bade draw nigh th' all-glorious company;
> Yet, Ah! He left me here.
> That day His servants who gained grace to go with Him,
> Mingled in perfect union with Himself,
> While those that gained it not leaped on the fire!
> Then did bewilderment come over them.
> On earth they rolled, they fell, they wailed,
> They rushed with eager foot to reach the sea;
> "Our Lord, our Lord," they wept and called.
> While those who gained His foot pressed near,
> And cried, "Celestial Dancer, who to Paṭañcali gave grace,"
> And yearned to gain satiety of bliss,
> He dances 'mid the company of beauteous "Tiger-town,"
> That golden beauty like Himālaya wears,
> There to Umā, whose roseate mouth is filled with sweetness,
> And to Kāḷi grants the beauteous smile of His blest countenance.
> Thus the King with His assembled saints
> Joyous hath entered "Tiger-town," with garners filled,
> High Lord of Kailās that resounds with rapturous song.
>
> (II)

Many other hymns in the collection mention Citamparam in passing, but two of the later ones must be quoted in full because of the way they use refrains concerning Citamparam to tie together statements about the nature of Śivan̲ worship. In the first of these, number 31, we have a vivid personal account of the mystic's special sense of self-debasement:

> In senses' power, sure cause of death, I erewhile 'wildered lay,
> Oft rapt through realms of boundless space, then plunged in dismal hells!
> He gave perception clear, made me all bliss, —made me His own!
> *I've Tillai seen*, that holds the Gem, which endless rapture yields!
>
> (XXXI.1)
>
> Enmeshed in grievous memories of deeds and fated births
> Outworn I lay; nor knew my soul one faintest thought of Him,
> The matchless One, who cuts off "birth"; who made me His with power!
> *Him have I seen in Tillai's court*, where worships all the world!
>
> (2)
>
> His form I knew not, —even though He fixed His love on me,
> Planted Himself within my thought and flesh, —so made me His!
> The Lord of sacred Turutti, I, currish slave, with joy
> *Have seen in Tillai's fane adorned*, the sweet and blissful seat!
>
> (3)
>
> To me, untaught, most ignorant, the very lowest cur,
> In mighty grace He came, with heavenly beauty me to clothe,
> And loosed my "servile bonds of sense" in sight of many men;
> His form *I've seen in Tillai's temple court*, where all bow down!
>
> (4)

Me whirled about 'mid "caste" and "clan" and "birth," and sore perplexed, —
Vile helpless dog, —He made His own, all sorrow rooting out;
Destroyed all folly, —alien forms, —all thought of "I" and "mine";
Ambrosia pure, *Him have I seen in Tillai*, where the saints consort!
(5)

From birth itself, from sickness, age to 'scape; earth's ties to loose;
I went,— I saw the "only first-one," Owner of the world,
Who dwells, while Vedic sages, hosts of heavenly ones adore,
In Tillai city's sacred court, girt round with leafy groves.
(6)

My servile bonds of sense in grace He loosed, —me loveless mean, —
Fast tied He to His sacred Feet by willing mind's stout bonds,
That never part; made me a fool in sight of men; and now
I've Tillai seen, where sportings of the wondrous Mage are known.
(7)

Sunk here midst infinite conceits, all ignorance was I;
I lay, poor empty soul, unweeting aught that might spring forth;
Now Him who made me His, bestowing raptures infinite,
I've seen in Tillai, where the guileless heavenly ones bow down!
(8)

To me, a dog, who knew not anything of seemly right,
He gave His heavenly grace, took me and cut off actions' guilt;
He gave unfailing love: light high and higher shone; Him I
In Tillai's court have seen, where the four mystic scrolls are conned!
(9)

The elements, the senses five, He is; and substance too.
All diverse forms He, mighty, wears; knows no diversity.
The gleaming Light that rules, and ill destroys; the Emerald;
Him have I seen in Tillai bright, where Vedas worship and extol!
(10)

In the fortieth hymn, the other side of the worshiper's emotion, the sense of uninterrupted joy, permeates the poetry. Here the poet becomes philosophical and the forms of life are left behind as the worshiper enters the "home" of God.

The potsherd and the skull I deemed my kin; my soul dissolved;
Wealth to be sought was Śivan̲'s foot alone, I clearly saw;
With soul and body to the earth in worship bent, a slave,
I've reach'd Him where He dances, Lord of Tillai's home of joy!
(XL.1)

Through fond desire of those of slender form and gentle words,
How many deeds soever guilt increasing, I have done,
Nor "death" nor "birth" I dread! He caus'd me to embrace His feet;
A slave, *I've reached Him who holds sway in Tillai's home of joy*!
(2)

Melting my inmost frame, He killed the germ of twofold deeds;—
Plucked out my rooted griefs; —made purely one the manifold—;
So that all former things might perish quite, He entered in!
I've reached Him Who in love bears rule in Tillai's home of joy!
(3)

Who severs not Himself from those whose minds are severed still
From vain assemblies void of "sign" and "way" and "temper" meet,—
The "goal of bliss", —Ambrosia's mighty flow, —to chastened thought
Revealed, —*I've reached Him Who holds sway in Tillai's home of joy*!
(4)

This same embodiment bound up with name and quality
To consummate, He cuts off sin that clings! His servants all
As they draw near, the honey taste of Śivan̲'s mercy, and
Are filled, where *I've reached Him Who rules in Tillai's home of joy*!
(5)

Bud on the bough, then rounded flower, next fruit unripe, then fruit
Matured, —my frame thus formed He made His own, nor hence departs—
That trusting thought may ever cling to Him, as it clings now,
I've reached Him Who holds sway in Tillai's golden home of joy!
(6)

The demon's arm for strength renowned, by the same sacred foot
That pressed upon my head, was crushed, and glorious rested there;
Thus by His grace I'm freed from galling bonds of life, and here
I've reached Him Who rules in Tillai's home of thrilling joy!
(7)

The sacred foot that walked within the wilds after the wild
Black boar that digs deep down, He planted on my head;
And so surpassing power of the five fierce ones' mighty play
Doth cease, when *I've reached Him Who rules in Tillai's home of joy*!
(8)

I lay as one who tills a barren field and reaps no crop;—
'Twas then the gain of penance done of old accrued, and thus
Before the Śaivan̲'s roseate lotus foot I bent my worthless head
His own, —*I've reached Him Who rules in Tillai's home of joy*!
(9)

Her form He shares who by His side grows as a tender bough;
To Him I with right mind my sacred ministries perform;
This here, abolishes whate'er results this state can yield;
I've reached Him Who bears rule in Tillai's home of heavenly joy!
(10)

While Tirumūlar gave Citamparam its awesomeness and association with the esoteric or *yogic* knowledge of the *cittars*, Māṇikkavācakar became its model "devotee" who bowed before the feet of the Dancing Image, rejoiced in the festival ceremony of the courtyard, and utilized the South Indian tradition of erotic emotion in worshiping both the Dancing God and the goddess.[17] In return for his devotion, the temple has given the image of Māṇikkavācakar a prominent place in its festival celebrations. During the morning processions of the two grand ten-day festivals, the image of Māṇikkavācakar is carried just ahead of the images of the deities. He is carried backward so that his folded hands of devotion are just in front of the deity. In addition, during the Mārkaḻi festival of December–January, there is an elaborate ceremony each evening accompanying the recitation of the twenty verses of his "Tiruvempāvai" hymn, the hymn that is traditionally sung in the early morning hours by women and girls throughout Tamiḻnāṭu during this month (see Story 2).[18] In the Citamparam temple when the hymn is sung as part of the festival, the image of Māṇikkavācakar is brought into the presence of the deity, and as the hymn finishes, the deity presents the image of Māṇikkavācakar with food and garlands almost as if it were being worshiped. In maintaining these special ritual forms of recognition the temple tradition has insisted that the spirituality expressed in Māṇikkavācakar and his hymns not be eclipsed by any of the other worship traditions that crowded in later.

The Peasant Hymn Singers: Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar

If Tirumūlar provided the Citamparam tradition with a reputation for esoteric knowledge, and Māṇikkavācakar with a foundation of mystical devotion, the itinerant hymn singers Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar gave it links to the popular hymn-singing tradition of the Kāvēri valley. The hymn singers of the Kāvēri which tied that farflung region into one cultural unit in the seventh and eighth centuries, and thereby provided a cultural base for the development of the powerful Cōḻa Empire a century later. As we have discussed earlier (in Story 4), the seventh century saw a major shift in the social structure and culture of South India. The earlier culture centers had been Maturai in the Pāṇṭya kingdom to the south and Kāñcīpuram in the Pallava kingdom to the north of Citamparam. These cities had each controlled early trade routes, and they had developed reputations for learning as well. Between them in the Kāvēri valley irrigation had been started quite early and the prosperity and population of the area had grown gradually. By the seventh century the Vēḷāḷa landowners who controlled the irrigation channels were prepared to take both political and religious initiatives. Politically the Vēḷāḷas organized a network of local *nāṭus* or petty states, which were eventually to become the basic segments of the Cōḻa Empire that emerged in the ninth century. Religiously they built temples in each of the *nāṭus* where some of the local traditions were drawn into a common form of worship and where the worship of Śivaṉ in particular was encouraged.

In this atmosphere of social and political change new forms of culture were quick to emerge as well. The most important of these new forms was that of the itinerant sectarian hymn singer. Itinerant entertainers were not a new thing in Tamiḻ culture, for most of the classical literature was produced by traveling bards called *pāṇar*,[19] and Vaiṣṇava temples had earlier had a tradition of visiting hymn singers, or *āḻvārs*.[20] What was new in the seventh century was that the two Śaiva hymn singers, Appar and Campantar, came to be so strongly associated with the political developments of the day both in the way they toured the major regions of the Kāvēri valley and in the way they were summoned to the Pallava and Pāṇṭya courts respectively. In those neighboring courts they each engaged in major confrontations with Jaina teachers and were successful in converting the rulers to Śaivism.[21] Western scholarship has tended to read the hymns of these itinerant singers out of context and put them at the head of a "*bhakti*" movement, which, on the analogy of Protestantism, was thought to be antipriestly and antiritualistic.[22] The analogy is not very good, for while these people did not emphasize ritual, it was not because they were rebelling against a heavily ritualistic tradition, but because they were for the first time introducing a newly prosperous, but somewhat unsophisticated, peasant population to the tradition of Śaiva worship. Priests and ritual were, in fact, shortly to become an important part of the Śaiva tradition of South India, but in the seventh century the rivals of the Śaiva hymn singers were the Jaina teachers who had been able to win strong support from the merchants and the rulers of the city-based empires in Kāñcīpuram and Maturai. The hymns are certainly devotional in tone, but the polemical initiative of which they were a part is also transparent as they waste no opportunity to condemn the Jainas in the bluntest language[23] and carefully connect Śivaṉ with the many local traditions of the Kāvēri valley.

The Citamparam temple itself probably did not have a major role in the cultural initiatives of the Kāvēri valley during the seventh century. The itinerant hymn singers visited the temple and treated it with some awe, but they did not make it their base.[24] It was only when Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi was asked by the king to collect the hymns from Citamparam in the ninth century that this peasant-based hymn-singing movement was directly tied in to the Citamparam tradition (see Story 4).

Appar

Appar, the senior member of the trio of itinerant hymn singers, was a Vēḷāḷa with a dramatic religious biography.[25] Orphaned as a child, he became a Jaina monk while a teenager. As a result of his sister's prayers, he was later reconverted to the family practice of Śaivism and started to sing hymns in Śaiva temples. The Pallava emperor Mahendravarmaṉ, who was at that time a supporter of Jainism, was upset by his reconversion and summoned Appar to his court. Appar was able to perform miracles for the emperor and Mahendravarmaṉ was converted to Śaivism. Appar spent the rest of his life traveling and singing hymns at different temples. During the course of these journeys he met Campantar, who was then a young boy, on a similar hymn-singing tour. It was Campantar who addressed him as "*Appar*" or "Father," thus giving him that name of endearment, which came to be more commonly used than his proper name of Tirunāvukkarasar.

Appar sang eight hymns in Citamparam. While they reflect the spirit of someone responding to the atmosphere of worship in the place, they nevertheless carry on the general themes of Appar's theology, which was a robust faith in the god who had forgiven a simple Vēḷāḷa farmer who had gone astray.

The first hymn is largely a description of the deity and the place:

> You can see here the Lord with the light-giving crescent moon on his head of matted locks, the one who has the throat of poison. At the Little Hall of Tillai, which is surrounded by groves that exude honey, and is covered by clouds, the Lord dances with fire in his hand, and makes the darkness go away. (I.1)

He rides a bull; the crescent moon shines over his head; he wears the Ganges; and he has Umā with her bangles in part of his body. In the Little Hall of Tillai, surrounded by groves of lustrous flowers, the Lord dances with fire in his hand, after smearing his body with holy ashes. (2)

He has matted locks; he smears his body with ashes; he has the crescent moon shining on his head; and he eats from the skull in which he collects alms. In the Little Hall of Tillai, with good-smelling flowers, he dances with fire in his hand, and makes a sound with his anklets. (3)

He wears the hooded serpent on his waist; the cool moon shines on his head; and he has the collyrium-painted lady and Viṣṇu as part of him. In the famous Little Hall of Tillai, surrounded by fields, He dances waving the fire in his hand. (4)

He chants the *Veda*; the bright moon shines over his head; he is the chief of the *gaṇas* who surround him; and he wears a tiger skin. He is the Lord who dances in the Little Hall of Tillai, with fire in his hand and white conch shells as his earrings. (5)

In one body you are two beings; the bright moon shines on your head; the *gaṇas* clap their hands; and you are the Supreme Lord. In the Little Hall at Tillai, in that great expanse of space, you dance with fire in your hand. (6)

He is the Primal One; the moon shines over his head and diffuses light over his matted locks; and he wears the skin of an elephant. He is the Lord and you can see him. In the Little Hall at Tillai, surrounded by groves where bees hum, he dances with the fire, and has a furious snake in his hand. (7)

He is well versed in the Secret Knowledge; he holds a drum in his hand; the moon shines over his head; and he is the Lord who removes the difficulties of those who worship him. In the Little Hall at Tillai, where the backwaters are found, he dances with fire and makes noise with his tinkling anklets. (8)

He can take on the appearance of an old man or a child; he has the spreading moon shining over his head; when he dances his long locks swing; and he is the Lord of Tillai. In the Little Hall of Tillai, he dances with the fire and his pure and perfect body. (9)

He is both a youth and an aged one; he has a cool moon shining over his head; he spurned the god of death with his leg; and he rides a bull. In the Little Hall at Tillai, which is as wide as the world, he dances with fire in his hand and shows us his blue throat. (10)

The foolish *rakṣasa* ran and lifted the mountain. The Lord with the Ganges in his hair saw this and made the mountain crush him. In the Little Hall at Tillai with its lofty groves which touch the moon, the Lord with fire in his hand dances wonderfully. (11)

In the second of the eight hymns, Appar expresses the self-effacing sentiments he was noted for:

> I do not sing like a devotee, O Lord; how can I show *bhakti* to you? Do not dismiss me, O Lord, who confers bliss. O Primal One, O Lord, who dances in the Hall of Tillai, I have come here to see your dance. (II.1)
>
> I do not sing with a firm mind, O Lord, who has the one with young-bamboo-shoot–like shoulders in part of your body. O Effulgent Light, with a holy body

> which cannot truly be perceived by anyone, I have come to see your dance in the Little Hall of Tillai, which has many pilgrims. (2)
>
> I heard of you and now I will not leave you. Should you like to hear what I say you would know I have firmly fixed your feet in my mind. You dance with Umā in the Little Hall which is surrounded by waters abounding in *vāḷai* fish. (3)
>
> Please allow me to serve you with an undivided mind, O Lord. What can I do for you? When you dance both night and day in the Little Hall, where sacrifices are performed by those who do fine sacrifices, do not your feet become exhausted? (4)
>
> I wandered as I liked, but I entertained your feet in my mind. I danced and I sang and I will join you if it is your wish. O Lord you dance at the Little Hall which is surrounded by groves where the trees sing songs and the rulers of the eight directions worship your dance. (5)
>
> I, your disciple, have come to see your dance and extol you. I will sing and dance saying "O Divine Lord." I will call out to you: "O Primal One! O Lord who eradicates suffering! O Dancer at the Little Hall of Tillai! I have come to witness your dance." (6)
>
> Please bestow your grace, O Lord, to remove all falsehood and allow me to do inner service for you. O Primal One! O Primal One! O Supreme Being! I have come to see your dance at the Little Hall which is great on the earth. (7)
>
> My mind, becoming confused, proceeds eagerly and with haste in wrong paths. What shall I do, O Lord, who has poison in your throat? In order to see all the sacred parts of the Little Hall at Tillai, where the *Vedas* are chanted incessantly, have I come. (8)
>
> Although I purified my mind you have not directed me to think in the right way. Are you a deceiver, O Lord of the gods? O Handsome One, the lady of sweet speech witnesses your dance in the Little Hall at Tillai, which is surrounded by groves where the clouds move about. (9)
>
> Viṣṇu, who ate the earth, and Brahmā, who is seated on the lotus, longed in vain to see your lofty form, O Robust Holy One! You dance in the Little Hall at Tillai and sing songs set to music, O Supreme Being! (10)

In the third hymn Appar attempts to describe the state of paralysis which comes over the worshipers who have witnessed the dance:

> The areca nut palms with many fronds rise high and crowd close to the lofty mansions. The *vāḷai* fish abound in the water of the fertile fields. In such a Tillai Lord Śivaṉ's anklet dances in the Little Hall. After the ghostlike devotees witness the dance, what else would their eyes be able to see? (III.1)
>
> This one who is the embodiment of virtue has a warring bull, and is robed in a tiger's skin. He is the husband of Umā the beautiful daughter of the Himālayas. The Antaṇar who have the blessing of final bliss, dwell in Tillai. After seeing the anklet feet of the Lord of the Little Hall, what else could one see with that eye? (2)
>
> Brahmā and Viṣṇu always worship together offering flower garlands, incense, and sandal paste, yet the Lord cannot be perceived by them even when they smear their body with holy ashes. After seeing even the Lord's clothes in the gold-plated Little Hall at Tillai, what else could one see with that eye? (3)

Wealth saved is of much use in later life. Even so have I chanted the *ŚI VA YA NA MA* in order to put away fear. The Lord, who is unborn and whose vehicle is Nanti, dances in the Beautiful Hall at Tillai. After seeing the beauty of the girdle on his stomach, what else could one see with that eye? (4)

In the fields at Tillai blue flowers blossom. In the Little Hall the Daughter of the Mountain, her bright eyes painted with collyrium, witnesses the dance with joy. His throat is blue as if it were burned with *ghee*. He is adept in dance. After seeing the dance, what else could one see with that eye? (5)

He relieved me of my chronic sickness and made me his disciple in the presence of the public. He is luscious like honey. He is the Lord of the Little Hall at Tillai. My Lord devoured the poison and his throat shines like the tusk of a boar. After seeing that throat with one's eye, what else is there to see? (6)

With a choice arrow he burned the three aerial cities with a blazing fire. He is the Lord of the gods. Those who entertain his feet in their mind flourish at Tillai. He is the Lord of the Little Hall. With the eye that has seen his smiling face, what else can be seen? (7)

Indra, the Head of the gods, implored: "Except for your feet we have no other refuge!" and the Lord swallowed the poison and emerged from the sea. He burned Kāma by the fire of his third eye. After seeing that eye in the forehead of the Lord of the Little Hall at Tillai, what else can one see with one's eye? (8)

Tillai is inhabited by those who entertain in their mind his red lotus feet. The Lord of the Little Hall is a pearl, a diamond, and a ruby. On him hangs the garland of shining purple flowers. To those who have seen the purple flower, what else can be seen? (9)

With the ten-jeweled crown on his head, the giant Rāvaṇa with great pride used the overwhelming strength of his shoulders and lifted the lofty mountain onto his mountainlike shoulders. He then made a great noise and laughed at the Daughter of the Mountains and the Lord. The Lord of the beautiful Tillai Hall pressed down with his toe and trampled him. With the eye that saw that toe, what else could be seen? (10)

The fourth hymn wrestles with the question of how a stumbling mortal can appropriate the grace of God:

He is the Lord with the black neck. He is the Lord of the universe. He is the wish-fulfilling tree. He is the capable one who aims at and destroys the three cities. He performs his holy dance with fire in his hand. He is the Lord who performs his everlasting dance in the Little Hall of Tillai. I adore him, the Lord of the gods. (IV.1)

Please be united with him, meditate on him, and no flaw will you have. For the sake of a devotee he spurned the god of death. Go and worship before the dance in the Little Hall at Tillai, where the countenance of my Lord seems to ask, "When did you come?" (2)

O you, hardhearted comrades, why do you always talk of loving? How will you gain that way? The Lord who is dancing with a full heart in the Little Hall at Tillai is like a silver mountain in the midst of a golden mountain. He came and entered my heart, but a true impression of his footstep can never be perceived. (3)

> The curved eyebrow, the gentle smile on the creeperlike mouth, the milklike white ash smeared on the coral body, the upraised golden foot—just so that these might be perceived in a human birth is this huge world required. (4)
>
> We are fortunate to have taken this birth and you had better esteem it, O you within the congregation of devotees. He awarded the arrow "Pasupatha" to Arjuna. He also aimed an arrow and burned the three cities. Is it not a duty to become the devoted slave of such a one? (5)
>
> His matted locks shine like gold. Śivan̲'s *gaṇas* shout and gather around clapping their hands. The bees hum and sing. And in the Little Hall the Lord dances. Could there be anyone better than the Dancer at Tillai for the one with exquisite bangles? (6)
>
> There is the white thornapple flower in the crown of the head, the glance of the three eyes, the hand holding the little drum, the white sacred ash, the part of the body occupied by the curly haired one, the tiger's skin, and the tinkling anklet of the Dancer in the Hall at Tillai—all these occupy the heart of me, the sinner. (7)
>
> I held the five letters in my mouth as a weapon. I am not just a passing earthen vessel for in all seven forms of birth I will faithfully serve you. Even if you should desert me, I will not leave you. I will worship, bow down, and smear myself with ash. I will take refuge in you, O Hara, of the Dancing Hall at Tillai. (8)
>
> He smeared his golden body with sacred ash. His tangled locks glistened like lightening. He roamed about taking alms. He has a beauteous form and carries a trumpet. This whole wide world is in ecstatic joy having seen the Lord's dance in the Little Hall at Tillai. (9)
>
> He lifted his foot to scratch the moon at the sacrifice of Dakṣa. He lifted his foot to spurn the god of death. Viṣṇu and Brahmā went in search of the foot which the Lord lifted in dance at the Little Hall of Tillai. It was that lifted foot that admitted me into his grace. (10)

The fifth hymn has a tone of simple urgency, which any peasant could readily grasp:

> The Little Hall at Tillai will supply food. It will supply gold. It will confer anything. By seeing this place, by perceiving it and being delighted, one gets a yield of many more lives. (V.1)
>
> Offer chosen flowers to the Lord and worship him. He is the Lord who burned Kāma, and the one who uses sugarcane as a bow. He is the Lord of the town of the Devoted Tiger. (2)
>
> Before your deeds eat away at you and start to oppress you, and before your neighbors talk about you as they lay you down surrounded by fire, go to the Little Hall and be saved. (3)
>
> What can the deeds of the present do about my future, or those of the past do about the present, or those of both the past and the present do, when I have taken unreserved servitude to the Lord of the Little Hall at Tillai? (4)
>
> As long as my soul breathes in this body I will meditate on my Lord. The one who is in the honeyed Little Hall will place me in the heavens. (5)
>
> Those who are well versed in the Vedas, and even the gods themselves, receive boons from the Little Hall at Tillai where the Antaṇar [Sages] live in prosperity.

> The tormenting Yama, the god of death, will never approach the wise ones who go to worship the feet of the Lord who is the embodiment of wisdom. (6)
>
> He is the incomparable one. He is the illuminator of the worlds. He is the holy of holies. He is the Lord of the Little Hall at Tillai. He is aged and he is young. He swallowed poison. He is rich. He has another in half his body. And he knows who his devotees are. (7)
>
> In the violent flame form in which he pervades the sky, he could not be perceived by the two eternal beings. He is an incomparable one who dances in the Hall surrounded by fragrant groves pleasing to the eye. (8)
>
> He destroyed the three fortifications of the gigantic demons by bending his bow. It is a truth that the deeds of those who worship the Tillai town border with folded hands will vanish quickly. (9)
>
> Viṣṇu and Brahmā searched and then reported that they had wandered all over searching for a sight of him. The feet of the Dancer are seated right here in my heart at Tillai, which is surrounded by many-storied houses. (10)
>
> He has in one part of his body the lady of honeyed speech. He is omniscient. He is the Lord of the Little Hall. He tread on and crushed the ten-headed one who lifted the holy mountain. Approach the feet of this one and be saved. (11)

The sixth hymn is the last one we will translate from; the seventh and eighth present much the same images and ideas as we have already seen. In this hymn, Appar starts to fear that his faith might waver and, in spite of his present joy, he might again ''forget'' his Lord as he had when in his youth he turned to Jainism:

> He peeled the skin of the musk elephant which had a tusk like the log of a palmyra tree. He also resides in the heart of his devotees who meditate on him in the temple. He takes many guises. He is the Dancer in the Hall. Can I be saved if I should forget him for even a moment as small as a grain of millet? (VI.1)
>
> He is the holy one. He is the Lord of Śivaloka. He is embodied in the image. He is the Primal One. He has bestowed grace on Arjuna. He is the Dancer in the Little Hall. Can I, a cruel one, ever be saved if I should forget him? (2)
>
> He ties a snake about him. He holds a skull and a fawn. With joy he dances on the fire of the burial ground. The Cittar [Yogis] live in Tillai where the Lord dances in the Hall. Can I forget him for a time as small as a sesame seed and still be saved? (3)
>
> He is the Lord who put the whole world under the authority of the youth who performed a bath of the deity while milking his cows [Caṇṭēcuraṉ]. He is my excellent Lord. He is the Lord who dances at the Hall of pure gold. If I should forget him, could I be saved? (4)
>
> He is a madman who uses the burial ground as a stage. He is free of all bonds. He wears the tender white moon. He has supernatural power. He stands in the Hall of pure gold. He is the eminent one. If I should forget him, could I be saved? (5)

Campantar

The life stories of Campantar are better known than those of his older contemporary Appar. He was born into a *brāhmaṇa* family of Cirkāḻi, a town fifteen miles south of Citamparam. One day, while he was still a baby, his parents were bathing in the temple tank, and he was left on the steps and started to cry. Feeling pity on him Śivan̲ and Umā arrived and Umā took him up and nursed him with divine milk. He is said to have started singing as a small child of three years old and soon was traveling from temple to temple. The lute player who accompanied him was Nīlakaṇṭaperumpāṇar, and one may assume that the uniform metrical forms and rigidly prescribed eleven-verse format of the hymns might have been the result of Nīlakaṇṭaperumpāṇar's guidance. Invited to the Pāṇṭya capital by the queen who had been born a Cōl̲a and was a devout Śaiva, Campantar was able to perform miracles that the Jaina ascetics associated with the king could not, and the king was converted to Śaivism and had many of the Jaina ascetics put to death. At the age of sixteen Campantar died just before his marriage was to take place.[26]

The contents of the hymns of Campantar are simple and straightforward expressions of devotion, but the hymns have been set in an externally formal structure which emphasizes their sectarian and polemical character. Each hymn has eleven verses with one verse toward the end given over completely to the condemnation of the Jainas, and a final verse serving as a signature verse stating who Campantar himself is. In analyzing this style the Russian scholar A. M. Pyatigarsky has suggested that while Appar reveals his own "interior state" and describes god "in relation to himself," Campantar reveals himself only as one committed to the Śaiva cult and speaks of god not so much in relation to himself but in terms of the traditionally accepted and objective symbols of cult.[27] In a clever epigram this same point is often made in the Indian setting by quoting the deity as having said "Appar praised me, Campantar praised himself." For much of the South Indian Śaiva tradition, this formal stylistic feature of Campantar's hymns has, however, been overlooked, and he is thought of as the hymn writer with the purest and simplest childlike devotion. His name is generally pronounced in its full form to emphasize that he is "Tiru" (holy)-"ñāna"(enlightened)-Campantar.

Although born very near Citamparam, Campantar composed only 2 of his 383 hymns there. His life story seems to imply a hesitation on his part about going to Citamparam when it indicates that it was only after worshiping in a temple a few miles east of Citamparam that he had a vision in which he saw the priests of Citamparam as the *gaṇas* or attendants of Śivan̲ and decided that he should go there and worship as well.[28]

The first of his hymns includes vivid descriptions of the worship scene in Citamparam.

> He is the one who presides in the Little Hall of Tillai where live those who have fought for the prevention of the Kali Yuga by tending the sacrifices and by learning. He is the Primal One, who wears a white crescent moon. Those who continually hold fast to his feet cannot be held by the evil powers. (I.1)
>
> He is the one who presides in the Little Hall of Tillai where the Antaṇar [Sages] do the Pacu Sacrifice and establish sacrificial altars everywhere. If one sees this birthless Lord with flowing locks behind him, then the infatuation with life will disappear. (2)

> In bamboo-surrounded Tillai, where women with black makeup smeared on their eyes play handball in the main streets; there in the Little Hall of the temple the Red One, who performs the eternal mystic dance for the sake of the whole world, makes his abode. (3)
>
> In Tillai, where the Big Hall blocks the crescent moon as it passes, and the pure white banners on the tall buildings touch the sky; there in the Little Hall, where even the bees do not make a sound, is the Lord, the joyful worship of whose feet is real joy. (4)
>
> In Tillai where live the wealthy whose luxurious tall mansions rise high in the sky toward the prosperous moon; there in the Little Hall is the truly prosperous one of whom it can be said that the luxuriant worship of his feet is the true riches. (5)
>
> In the Little Hall of regal Tillai the woman with a body like a tender mango leaf is a part of the Lord. If one worships the feet of the Lord who has a dark spot on his neck and surrounds himself with the dark skin of an elephant, then one's heart will seek no further. (6)
>
> He sports with the Daughter of the Mountains and wears the Lady of the Ganges in his hair; and for the good of the world he destroyed the three cities with a bow. Those who bow the head to the one in the Little Hall will become the head of mankind. (7)
>
> The one who presides over the Little Hall with the luxuriant dome took away the power of the demon with the sharp sword [Rāvaṇa]. He is the one with the wavelike locks. Those who worship him regularly are sure of getting rid of all incurable diseases. (8)
>
> The one with the coiling serpent as his bed [Viṣṇu], and the one seated on the lotus [Brahmā], were unable to see the end of him, but worshiped his feet as his flame spread higher and higher. He is the unbending one in the little Hall of Tillai where live the Antaṇar [Sages]. Before him all disease will silently disappear. (9)
>
> Do not listen to the saffron-clad ones [Jainas] who practice the "*paṭimā*" and speak ignorant words. Worship always the Dancing Lord presiding in the Little Hall of Tillai, where dwell the Cittar [Yogis]. (10)
>
> Whoever sings with beauty this Tamiḻ garland set forth by the righteous Nāna Campantar of Kāḻi, the greatest place in the world, will be blessed. (11)

Campantar's second Citamparam hymn reveals his *brāhmaṇa* priestly heritage in that it specifically mentions the *brāhmaṇas* of Tillai three times and shows an interest in the details of the bathing ceremony and other aspects of the worship ritual. It also supplies a very specific theological purpose for the worship by asking in the refrain that past deeds be wiped out:

> You sought as your abode the Little Hall which the Antaṇar never leave, and there you are bathed in *ghee*, milk, and curds. O Lord, you like *konrai* flowers and you sing the *Vedas* and many other songs. You wear matted locks and the white moon. Please bestow grace that the effects of our deeds of former births may dry up. (II.1)
>
> You are one with the lady of sweet-smelling hair. You ride on the bull, and you adorn your forehead with a golden plate. You sing musically, and you perform a

dance in the world. The holy Antaṇar of Tillai never leave the Little Hall, and with joy you reside there too. Why? (2)

He wears a blue garland. His throat is black. He has an eye on his forehead, and he holds a trident. He smears his body with holy ashes from the cremation ground, and he has matted locks. The virtuous worship and adore the Little Hall. As they approach him, they adore his anklets and worship his hand. O Beautiful One, please bestow grace on us, and we will sing your praises. (3)

She has a tender waist like a creeper, and her face is like a beautiful lustrous moon. Her eyes are like arrows, and the Lord with matted locks has her in one part of his body. The young devotees noisily and affectionately worship the feet of the Lord with anklets as he resides in the Hall. Their past deeds will not affect those who worship him. (4)

Long ago, O Lord, in order that the gods might have the ambrosia, you ate the poison. You have a throat like a pure gem. O Paṇḍaraṅka, you roam about begging in a bowl which is a skull with teeth in it. At the Little Hall the Antaṇar of Tillai worship. O Lord, who burned the feet of the three demons, the past deeds of those who worship your feet will vanish. (5)

O Lord who wears the garland of *konrai* flowers on your chest; and who has the fire in your hand. O God of gods; O Lord of the eight attributes, who has Umā as part of you; O Paṇḍarānka, who goes about begging; the Little Hall where you reside abounds in groves that touch the sky. O Lord, who has many weapons and a ferocious serpent on your waist, let the past deeds of your devotees not torment them. (6)

O Lord, who has crystal-like white conchshell earrings; O famous Lord, well versed in the *Veda*; O omniscient One; for you, the Primal One, the place of abode is the Little Hall of Tillai, which has many beautiful festivals. Those devotees capable of worshiping you there will not be affected by their past deeds, which will leave without harassment. (7)

O Omniscient One, you are ambrosia to the souls. O Lord, you like to dance with the lady who has bamboolike shoulders. O Lord, you like to dance in the cremation ground, and you burn the cities using fire as an arrow. The famous Little Hall is your abode. By worshiping at your feet we will reach the highest heaven. (8)

O Lord who wears a garland of *konrai* flowers; O Lord who has long matted locks with a moon in them; O My Lord of beautiful Tillai with the streets over which the temple chariots move. In the Little Hall worship never ceases. You, who reside there in beauty, your feet we adore. (9)

The Jainas wear either no clothing around their waist or they wear saffron-colored cloth. Do not hear their words for they cannot remove any of the suffering of the world. The learned worship and adore the Lord of the Little Hall. Those who worship his feet with affection get all the ends of human life. (10)

Nāna Campantar, who is well versed in the four *Vedas* and is a resident of Cirkāḷi, which is surrounded by groves of fragrant flowers, has composed in Tamiḻ these ten musical stanzas on the Lord of the Little Hall. Those who are capable of reciting them will join the company of the gods. (11)

Cuntarar

Cuntarar, the third of the itinerant hymn singers was not a contemporary of Appar and Campantar, but lived a century later and saw his vocation somewhat differently. Like Campantar, he was a *brāhmaṇa*, but he delighted in making a mockery of his human problems, which included two out-of-caste marriages to a low-caste temple dancer and to a Vēḷāḷa woman. He makes much of the fact that he was continually struggling with poverty, but he was at the same time a friend and supporter of kings and emperors. The chief sovereign of the day was the Pallava emperor, and he says in his hymn at Citamparam that those who fail to pay tribute to that sovereign will be punished by Śivaṉ. The story of his life that is best known, however, is his friendship with the prince of the Cēras known as Cēramān Perumāḷ with whom he is supposed to have carried on a close relationship.

In addition to his hymns he made another contribution to the Śaiva tradition which was to be of great long-run significance when he collected brief life stories of the sixty-three saints or *nāyanmār*, stories that were apparently being told in temples at the time. Five of these stories were located in Citamparam and might be summarized briefly:

> **The Antaṇar**
>
> The primary Citamparam story is the one that begins the collection in which the whole priestly community is celebrated as a single unit. The story is that Cuntarar wanted to prepare a list of the saints, but he was hesitating as to how to begin when the deity himself intervened and gave him the first line, which was to say of himself: *tillai vāl antaṇar tam aṭiyārkkum aṭiyēn*, "I am the servant of the servants, the Antaṇar who dwell in Tillai." This dramatic opening sentence, which is known by almost every Śaiva child in Tamiḻnāṭu, placed the ascetic priests of Citamparam first in the list, and provided them a formally recognized special status as the first among Śaiva devotees.[29]
>
> **Nantaṉ**
>
> The second story is of an Untouchable named Nantaṉ, who served as a watchman outside of temples and became known for his ecstatic trances. Longing for years to go to Citamparam, he became the butt of a joke because he told everyone he would go "tomorrow," and they began calling him Nalaipōvar or "Go Tomorrow." Eventually the priests of Citamparam had a vision that they would find him in the midst of their Vedic sacrifice, and in that purified form they should take him to the Dancing Image. When he appeared in the sacrifice, he was taken for worship and was absorbed into the image of the deity.
>
> **Nīlakaṇṭaṉ**
>
> The third story is about Nīlakaṇṭaṉ who came home from a prostitute and was told by his wife never to touch her or any other woman. He acknowledged her vow and they lived a long life of piety and never touched one another again. They were old and childless when Śivaṉ in the disguise of a mendicant visited them. He asked them to care for his pot when he left the house, and when he returned years later they had misplaced it. He ordered them to bathe together in the temple tank as penance, but they explained that they could not. The Citamparam priests suggested

that they bathe with each holding the end of a stick between them. They agreed and came out of the water a young couple again.

Kūṟṟuva

The fourth story is the one mentioned earlier (Story 4) where the Kaḷabhra king Kūṟṟuva asked the priests of Citamparam to crown him, and they refused saying that they only crowned Cōḻa kings. While they refused and fled the temple, the story is that he was so persistent that Śivaṉ himself crowned him and he became one of the devotees who served in the temple.

Kanampullaṉ

The fifth story is that of Kanampullaṉ who was a rich man who decided to dedicate all his wealth to providing oil for lamps in the temple. As he got old he could only provide oil by cutting bundles of grass to sell for cattle feed. When even the grass gave out he pulled out his hair and used it for fuel.

While these five stories are ample evidence that Cuntarar spent considerable time in Citamparam, he has sung only one hymn to the deity in the temple. This hymn is special in that it uses the imagery of being enslaved and having one's political rights held by a particular deity or sovereign. This image has an autobiographical ring in that it recalls the well-known legendary account Cuntarar gave elsewhere of his encounter with Śivaṉ who kidnapped him as he was about to go off for his marriage. In the story, Śivaṉ in the disguise of a *brāhmaṇa* insisted that the members of Cuntarar's family were slaves of his family. The case was taken to the judge where evidence to that effect was presented, and Cuntarar was declared a slave. Only then did the true identity of Śivaṉ come to be known. The hymn uses the slave imagery to offer a poignant picture of devotion:[30]

> O heart, which has lived your days without serving the upraised foot of the Lord or stopping to be made his slave, he will, stop and enslave you at the moment when the agents of Dharumaṉ [the god of death] begin to cast you beneath the grinding wheel. He is the Lord who dances in Tigertown, in the Little Hall, where he holds the black serpent which hisses fiercely, and has a drum and a pot of fire in his hands. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (I.1)
>
> Unlike those who have indulged in passion without ceasing, there are devotees who have fallen before the upraised foot, and full of goodness, have practiced unceasing contemplation. Not knowing this, the agents of Dharumaṉ go to cast them all beneath the grinding wheel, but then He will stop them and make them his slaves. He is the Lord of the Little Hall in Tigertown where the Antaṇar reside. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (2)
>
> Not aware that there are people whose hearts have been placed at the feet of god and have given themselves in unswerving love to constant contemplation, and who have given up the tendency to be of two minds like the deceitful foxes, the agents of Dharumaṉ begin to cast everyone before the grinding wheel. He then stops them and makes such people his slaves. He is the Lord of the Little Hall in Tigertown where the Antaṇar reside. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (3)

By causing the bonds that have been bound on us by the agents of Dharumaṉ to be cut, he will give us the freedom which is rarely obtained. He will cause trouble for those chieftains who fail to pay tribute to the Pallava ruler who has by right been adorned with sovereignty over the whole of the earthly realm. He is the Lord of the Little Hall in Tigertown where the Antaṇar reside. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (4)

He is the one who is dressed in the black skin of an animal, who has reddish locks on his head, who is adorned with a white crescent moon and a garland of flowers, who gives one unending joy when he kicks and tumbles death until it thunders. He is the one who stops the agents of Dharumaṉ when they are about to throw you under the grinding wheel, and makes you his own. He is the Lord of the Little Hall in Tigertown where the Antaṇar reside. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (5)

O heart! Please stop! Do not wander any longer without direction. O conscience! Please listen to that which tells us that there is no way to reduce the cost of the demands of the flesh. The one who does a mad dance in the Little Hall of Tigertown, the one who has a serpent with a spread hood, the one who has disheveled hair and carries a great flame, he is the one who destroys sin. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (6)

He is said to be the image-presence for the Mūvāyiravar [Three Thousand] when they do the ritual three times each day without fail. He causes the destruction of *karma* and sin for the *bhaktas* who meditate on him. He moved his foot and crushed the hands of the ten-headed Rāvaṇa when he tried to lift the hill. He is the Lord of the Little Hall of Tigertown. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (7)

O heart! Always remember that there should be no lessening at any time of the contemplation which is without distraction, for it melts even stone. Just when the agents of Dharumaṉ are planning to throw one beneath the grinding wheel, he stops them and makes you his own. He is the one mounted on the bull. He is the Lord of the Little Hall in Tigertown. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (8)

O heart! Do good deeds always for the Lord who is so sought after. He is the one who stops them and protects you when the agents of Dharumaṉ are about to throw you beneath the grinding wheel. Both the Jainas with their big bellies and the Buddhists with their bad smells were put into ignorance by him. He is the Lord of the Little Hall in famous Tigertown. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (9)

He, who is in the shrine of every town, mounted on the soft-eyed bull, with Umā, the one with a waist the size of the serpent which creeps across the ground by his side, he is the one who stops them and protects you when the agents of Dharumaṉ begin to cast you beneath the grinding wheel. I, who am a disciple of the deity in Ārūrar, am from Ārūrar, and from Pērūr by the river Kāñcī in the West Koṅku. He is the Lord of the Little Hall in Tigertown. If you have arrived in his presence, what else do you need? (10)

The three early streams of Śaiva tradition are clearly distinct in these early hymns. The *cittar* movement with which Tirumūlar was linked may have had other ties to Citamparam because the Mūvāyiravar are also sometimes called *cittars*. The mystical devotion of Māṇikkavācakar had clear roots in the erotic poetry of the Pāṇṭya region, but he later became especially associated with Citamparam and still plays a central role in the festivals. The energetic peasant faith of Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar was different from the other two kinds, and it probably went back to the traditions of the Vēḷāḷa cultivators when they migrated to the area from the northwest of India. While each of these streams of tradition was separate in its origin, they were bound to become aware of one another as they arrived in the worship center of Citamparam. It was in Citamparam that the three streams came to be blended together into one common Śaiva tradition, and it was the Cōḻa kings who were most concerned to see that common tradition formed.

"Court-Sponsored Forms of Faith"

Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi

The three itinerant hymn singers, Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar, are often described in books on Hinduism as the authors of the *Tēvāram* hymnbook and the founders of a reform branch of Śaivism, with scant attention being paid to either the context in which they lived or the context in which their hymns came to be important.[31] As we have already seen they lived in the Kāvēri valley during a period of great social and political change in the seventh and eighth centuries before the emergence of Cōḻa power. To understand the religious use to which their hymns were put, one must recognize that it was after the emergence of Cōḻa power that their hymns were edited by Nampi and came to be regularly recited. As we have already seen in an earlier discussion of political initiatives in connection with the Citamparam temple, Nampi was asked by Ātitya, the one who brought about the expansion of the empire, to recover the hymns from Citamparam, edit them, and set them to music. In the centuries to follow, many inscriptions record donations made by the rulers and by others for regular recitations of the hymns in the temple grounds. In Vaiṣṇavism, just a few years later, Nātamuṉi did a similar editing job on the hymns of the *āḻvārs*, and the reciters of these hymns were considered respected members of the priestly Śrīvaiṣṇava community and were allowed to recite them in the inner sanctum. In contrast, the Śaiva hymns were always sung from outside the sanctum by laymen known as *ōtuvārs*.[32] Clearly the priestly ritual activity and the activity of hymn singing were considered two separate forms of worship in the Śaiva tradition.

By the ninth century when Nampi completed his work, the Śaiva tradition as practiced in a place such as Citamparam was made up of three separate strands of tradition united in a somewhat uneasy embrace. On the one hand, there was an esoteric *cittar* tradition, long associated with Citamparam. Second, there was a tradition of mystical devotion brought to Citamparam by Māṇikkavācakar. And, most recently, there was the peasant tradition of the Kāvēri valley which during the seventh and eighth centuries had emerged as the popular religion of that region and had been used by the Cōḻa rulers to give a unifying ethos to their state. Encouraged by the state, Citamparam took the initiative of binding the three strands into one synthetic whole, and the canon of southern Śaivism, known as the *Tirmuṟai*, would eventually include them all. The final form of this canon is probably a bit later, but the overall pattern it used in forging a unified Śaiva tradition is already clear in the editing work of Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi.

Kaṇṭarātitya

One of the interesting evidences of Śaiva devotion at Citamparam at this time is a hymn written by the Cōḻa prince, Kaṇṭarātitya, who was the son of Parāntaka I and the husband of the great temple-builder Cempiyan Mahātēvi. The hymn entitled *Tiruvicaippā* was included in the canon and is widely known to this day.[33] Kaṇṭarātitya's life ended mysteriously when after his brother's death at the great battle of Takkōlam in 907 he just disappeared from the scene when the empire badly needed leadership. It is assumed he either chose a life of devotion, or suffered a breakdown, which made him unable to rule. This beautiful hymn indicates that he was a most sensitive devotee in the Citamparam temple. It is, therefore, all the more remarkable that the later temple-building activity of his famous wife did not seem to include any work in Citamparam.

Kōyil: The Temple

> The lightening-like forms of the young girls are seen on the upper stories of the houses; the white flags fly from the palaces around; and the bees hum "O beautiful" as their sweet smell spreads around the Golden Mountain. O my Lord, who art the sweet ambrosia which dances in the Hall in southern Tillai, when can I attain your presence?
>
> The Antaṇar [Sages] there tend the three-tiered fire, perform the Five Sacrifices, know the Six Limbs and the Four Vedas, do the Pacu Sacrifice, and raise up the oblations. They total three thousand, and you, O Lord, stand with them on the front platform! When will it be possible to see your dance?
>
> The Mūvāyiravar [Three Thousand] who tend the three-tiered fire and the Four Vedas have as their nature that they live along with you, and their recitation of the Four Vedas is like the sound of bees. O thou who dost dance in the Hall in southern Tillai! O when can I see your dance?
>
> O thou who dost wear the crescent moon, and art, along with the Lady of the Mountain [Umā], who looks as innocent and tender as a deer, bathed in the five products of the cow, as well as in honey and milk. When, O Lord, may I, who possesses only a tender shoot of knowledge, be united with you in the Golden Hall in shining Tillai?
>
> O Lover of the river Kaṅkai, which was brought to earth from heaven, show grace to the luminous Māl [Viṣṇu] who stands waiting as you show the clear nectar to your devotees. Your light glows in the Golden Hall in shining Tillai. When may I, a *nāyan* [devotee], reach you, O Lord?
>
> All the world comes and offers praise as you make Paṭañcali happy with your dance. You have by your side the one whose breast is tied with a long strap. You

are the one with the dark throat. You dance in the Golden Hall of the revered and illustrous Tillai. When can I see that sight?

When the king of Śrī Laṅka [Rāvaṇa], who has a spear like a shining leaf, sought to lift the mountain with his twenty shoulders, you held him many days with your sickle-sword. You are also the one with the bow that hit the three cities. You are the one who has in his hand the golden deer. But when can I see you?

The just Cōḻa king of Uṟaiyūr, Cempiyan, who conquered both the hot-tempered tyrant of the South [Pāṇṭya] and the king of Śrī Laṅka, covered with gold the Hall of beautiful Tillai, where girls wearing bangles sing and dance. O my Lord, my supreme joy, when can I attain unto thee?

The tall *avatāra* [Viṣṇu] and the four-faced one [Brahmā] stand with the other heavenly beings so crowded together that their crowns bump one another and precious stones fall down to be swept up by the devotees in the Hall of beautiful Tillai, where you wear the garland of *konrai* flowers. O when can I see you?

He dances in the Golden Hall at Tillai which is full of goodness. Kaṇṭarātitya, who is the ruler of both Tañcāvūr and Uraiyūr, surrounded by groves, has woven these sweet words into a beautiful Tamiḻ garland. Those who read it will achieve the greatness that will bring bliss and glory in the world.

Cēkkiḻār

As we have already seen, the Early Cōḻas (Vicayālaya, Ātitya I, and Parāntaka I) sought to create a cultural ethos for their empire by supporting the hymn-singing tradition associated with the *Tēvāram* of the three itinerant singers Appar, Campantar, and Cuntarar, and by giving that peasant-based religious tradition a more specific focus by associating it with themselves and with Citamparam. The Middle Cōḻas (Rājarāja I and Rājēndra I) continued to support the hymn-singing tradition, but went in a rather new direction when they established royal temples in their respective capitals of Tañcāvūr and Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōḻapuram (see Story 4). It is not relevant to the present discussion to describe the ritual character of these royal temples, except to say that there is plenty of evidence that they included elaborate rituals with roles for royal figures, as well as priests, dancers, and others. These two rulers seem to have withdrawn direct royal support from Citamparam, but they did show continued devotion to the Dancing Image which they had installed in their royal temples and in other new temples Cempiyan Mahātēvi was having built at the time.[34] What is most interesting, however, is that under the Later Cōḻas (Kulōttuṅka I to Rājēndra III) the temple in Citamparam was completely remodeled (see Stories 3 and 4), and it gradually came to serve as the ''central'' temple of the empire, even though it was not directly under royal control as the temples of the Middle Cōḻas in Tañcāvūr and Kaṅkaikoṇṭacōḻapuram had been. The Later Cōḻas are frequently described as ''devout,'' but they do not seem to have taken many initiatives in the religious realm, and apparently limited their role to encouraging the ongoing tradition of Citamparam. One way we know about the religious spirit during the Later Cōḻa period is through the work of Cēkkiḻār, who was a minister in the court of Kulōttuṅka II, when he was asked by the emperor to go to the royal hall inside the Citamparam temple grounds and compose the famous *Periya Purāṇa*.[35]

What the *Periya Purāṇa* reveals is a Śaiva tradition that has been able to take its earlier strands of "yogic," "mystical," and "peasant" faith and to reformulate them in a context that has as its central focus the ritual activity of the court and the temple. As the *piracactis* or introductions of their inscriptions quoted in Story 4 reveal, Kulōttuṅka I and the other Later Cōl̲as thought of themselves as human representatives of Śivan̲. Śaivism was for them the proper cosmological foundation for the sense of order and prosperity they wished for their kingdom. Cēkkil̲ār as a court poet was obliged to link his account of the lives of the saints with that kind of emphasis on royal order, and in the ornate language of his text each of the saints took on an aura of grandeur. At the same time his own Vēḷāḷa peasant heritage and the stories he was telling allowed him to resurrect the simple faith of the people he was describing. By composing his great epic in the Citamparam temple, as if it were a divinely inspired work, and by starting it with praise for the Citamparam priests, he was also renewing the Śaiva tradition, and reconfirming the authority of Citamparam, which had come to be the one common denominator holding that tradition together over the centuries.

The Antaṇar [Sages] Who Live in Tillai

> Hail to the one who dances publicly in Tillai; the one who is the beginning, middle, and end; the one who is measureless; the one who is light, consciousness, and the manifest world; the one who is one without a second; the one who is male and female; the one who is shown to us in the dance. Hail!
>
> Hail to the holy feet that perform the dance so wondrously while standing in the Little Hall, which is itself consciousness or the supreme ether or space. You are the one who art revealed in the very heart of the Veda; the one who is now stretched out in the form of awesome compassion and light unspeakable. Hail!
>
> In this much-adored Tillai live the Antaṇar whose greatness is to be covered with ash because of their service to the one who has taken the form of a dancer. Their worth is without limit because they live only to perform service to the holy feet, and their value is only in that love.
>
> They serve with joy in that beautiful temple, concentrating on the duties assigned to each. In accord with the Vedic scriptures they do all forms of auspicious service and undertake the rituals with a beauty that increases holiness.
>
> They tend the three-tiered fire in the ancient way so that souls may prosper and be filled with grace; they understand *dharma* to be their only wealth. They are learned in the Four Vedas and the Six Limbs, and are competent in every way. Their excellence is that they have been chosen to be the servants of the one who does the holy dance.
>
> They come from an impeccable lineage. Their conduct is unwavering in the performance of the six functions [learning and teaching the scriptures, understanding and conducting the sacrifices, and giving and receiving gifts]. They have warded off the Age of Darkness. They look on adornment with ash as their only wealth. They live prosperously, counting as their greatest blessing their love for Śivan̲.
>
> Knowing faultlessly the four parts of the *Ākamam* [*Kriyā, Caryā, Yoga, Jñāna*], they are equally adept at sharing wealth and practicing austerity. They live as householders, and practice tolerance and sensitivity. Being fit for their task, they are free from sin hereafter.

There are three thousand of these divine vedic *brāhmaṇas*, who with a gentle manner live even now along with god. They have nothing to await in the hereafter. Their greatness and status can be measured only by comparison with themselves.

But why should I presume to speak about their greatness now? They were already placed first when the holy words were bestowed by grace on the lord of Arūr [Cuntarar], the "one taken slave by force" when he wrote that gem of the Tamil language, the *Tiruttoṇṭa Tokai*.

May all the world revere the Antaṇar of world-famous Tillai, and may those who possess the secret knowledge ever live the life of adoration before the dance![36]

"Theologically Formulated Expressions of Faith"

By the mid-thirteenth century the Cōḻa Empire had become a shell, and other political powers were able to assert themselves in the area of Citamparam. The temple was, however, flourishing, with support from different rulers, a major influx of pilgrims from North India, and scholars and theologians, with a number of different interests using the temple as a base for their work.

Theological orthodoxy was in the air, and Citamparam came under pressure from two very different forms of Śaiva orthodoxy. One influence had probably entered South India with the large pilgrim communities of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the priestly communities of all the large temples were being pressured into using more Sanskrit-based rituals. The other influence came from a popular local movement known as Śaiva Siddhānta, which was emphasizing the grace of Śivaṉ as it preached its form of Śaiva doctrine on the streets of the towns in the area.

The Sanskrit ritual texts known as the Ākamams come to be referred to regularly in South India during this period. Both Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva priests were asked to use these texts in their rituals, but each sect had a number of different texts and the priests often did not know Sanskrit very well, so it is not clear to what extent the older ritual patterns ever did become modified. In the case of Śaivism two dozen of these texts were supposed to have been compiled, and each one ideally covered the four topics of *kriyā* (ritual), *caryā* (devotional practice), *yoga* (meditation), and *jñāna* (knowledge).[37] We do not know what the attitude of the priests in Citamparam at the time was to the introduction of these texts into the area, but the present-day priests claim that they continued to use their older ritual system, based on "Vedic" patterns set down especially for this temple by Paṭañjali.

A somewhat more immediate and pressing form of the pressure to use Sanskritic traditions of worship was the publication of the *Śiva Purāṇa*. The *Śiva Purāṇa* presented, in popular Sanskrit, a summary of the myths and rituals associated with Śivaṉ worship.

Śiva Purāṇa

The *Śiva Purāṇa* is a Sanskrit text in the all-Indian tradition of *purāṇa*, and it is difficult to identify its time or place of origin. It would appear to be one of the later *purāṇas* and some scholars have suggested that it was written in the twelfth century. It may or may not have been written in the South, but it was well known there from the thirteenth century on. The text, once said to have had twelve chapters, now has only seven. The middle chapters contain the usual myths about Śivan̲ and the Goddess Parvati, and appear to be a self-contained unity. The first chapter, Vidyeśvara, and the last, Vāyavīya, are practical manuals on how to worship, and they appear to be instructions current at the time this final version of the text was put together. For our purposes there are two emphases found in these two chapters that also came into the worship system of Citamparam in the course of the thirteenth century: an emphasis on the importance of the priest and the prescribed acts of ritual worship, and an emphasis on *liṅkam* worship as the most efficacious form of Śivan̲ worship.

There is no way of knowing precisely when the rituals associated with orthodox Śaivism throughout India became known to the worshipers in Citamparam. Presumably the process was a gradual one. It was not so much that a standard liturgy was introduced, but more that a whole series of classifications of worship activities came to be recognized, and patterns of worship adopted, using these classifications as the skeleton or underlying structure. A few examples from the *Śiva Purāṇa* will suggest the idea.

> The attainment of Śiva's region is the Achievable.[38] Means of achievement is the service rendered unto Him. . . . Rites mentioned in the Vedas should be performed with the fruits thereof dedicated to Him. . . . The ways of achieving these standards are manifold as expounded by Iśa Himself. . . . I shall condense the same and tell you the essential means. Listening to the glory of Śiva [*śravaṇa*], glorifying him by means of words [*kīrtana*], and deliberation in the mind [*manana*], these constitute the greatest of the means.
>
> O excellent One, please explain the rules of the worship of clay idols. . . . In order to derive the full benefit of worship, the sixteen forms of service shall be observed: the sprinkling of water over the idol shall be performed with flowers. The pouring of water shall be performed with mantras. The food offering shall consist of cooked rice. . . . The ceremonial bath is conducive to the purity of the soul; the application of scented paste yields virtue. The food offering is conducive to longevity and gratification and the incense yields wealth. The lighting of the lamp is conducive to knowledge and the betel leaves are conducive to enjoyment. Hence in all worship these six items are scrupulously observed. . . .
>
> The sixteen types of service are: invocation [*āvāhana*], water offering [*arghya*], washing of the feet [*pādya*], water for rinsing the mouth as a mystical rite [*ācamana*], oil bath [*abhyanga snāna*], offering of cloth [*vastra*], scents [*gandha*], flowers [*puṣpa*], incense [*dhūpa*], lamps [*dīpa*], food offering [*nivedana*], waving of lights [*nīrājana*], betel leaves [*tāmbūla*], obeisance [*namaskāra*], and mystical discharge and conclusion [*visarjana*].

These examples should be sufficient to give some idea of the prescriptive nature of the approach to worship that characterized the *Śiva Purāṇa*. Associated with this general prescriptiveness is the special set of prescriptions urging Śaivas to focus their worship on the *liṅkam*.

> Everywhere the deities are worshiped only in their image. How is it that Śiva is worshiped both in the image and the phallus? O sages, this question is holy and

> wondrous. Here the speaker is Śiva Himself and not any ordinary person. I shall tell you what Śiva Himself had said and what I heard from my own preceptor. Śiva alone is glorified as *niṣkala* (nameless and formless) since he is identical with supreme Brahman. He is also *sakala* as He has an embodied form. He is both *sakala* and *niṣkala*. It is in his *niṣkala* aspect that the *liṅga* is appropriate. . . . The installation of the phallic emblem is primary and that of the embodied idol is secondary. A temple with the embodied idol of Śiva is unfructuous if it has no phallic image. . . . Although I consider the phallic and the embodied form to be equal, the phallic form is excellent for those who worship. Hence for those who seek salvation the latter is preferable to the former. . . . Having thus instructed His disciples Śiva vanished there itself.

As can be readily imagined, the prescription that the best form of Śivaṉ worship was the worship of the *liṅkam* was to prove a major problem for the worship tradition of Citamparam. There the worship centered not around Śivaṉ as known in the myths, but specifically around the dancing form of Śivaṉ. The tradition was so strong and so specific that replacing the Dancing Image was simply unthinkable. What was done was to install a *liṅkam* in a small temple just north of the wall surrounding the Dancing Image (see Story 3). This was probably done by the Pallava ruler Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ, and presumably was a controversial solution, which would have been approved by some but probably criticized by ardent supporters of both Dancing Image worship and *liṅkam* worship. Whatever the extent of the controversy around its installation, from the thirteenth century on Citamparam had a *liṅkam* temple and a generally orthodox Śaiva ritual pattern, even though the center of its worship continued to be focused on the long revered Dancing Image.

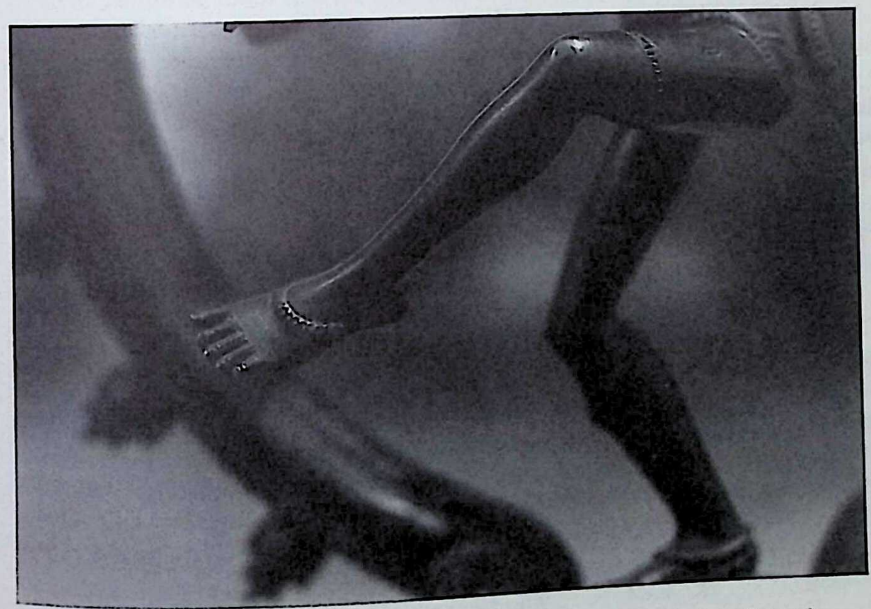
Śaiva Siddhānta

The second example of a theological reform having an impact on the Citamparam tradition has to do with the important popular religious movement known as Śaiva Siddhānta. This is not the place to go into the complex question of the social and theological origins of this movement. What can be said is that for a variety of reasons by the thirteenth century it was felt that there was a need for a more precise theological formulation of Śaivism in South India. Perhaps this sense of need arose from a heightened awareness of the presence of other well-formulated theological systems, such as Advaita and Viśiṣṭādvaita, in South India. Perhaps it arose from difficulties that became evident from the use of two different languages, Sanskrit and Tamiḻ, for different religious purposes. In any case during the thirteenth century Meykaṇṭar Tēvar set down in Tamiḻ a twelve-verse formulation of Śaiva theology called the *Śivaṉ ñāna pōtam*, which became the standard formula on which all later theologians commented. Prompted by the existence of this text and its commentaries, the tradition soon added to its canon of twelve hymnbooks called the *Tirumuṟai* the fourteen books of theology called the *Meykaṇṭar Sāstras*. With the formulation of this fuller canon a self-conscious tradition was born bearing the name Śaiva Siddhānta.

The theological formulation of Śaiva Siddhānta is a rigorously logical demonstration of the three entities of *Pati* or God, *pacu* or soul, and *pāca* or worldly bonds. The bonds are the three layers of *malam* or impurity that attach to the soul, namely the *āṇava malam* or the sense of ego, the *karma malam* or the specific residues of past action, and the *māyā malam* or general darkness of the world. While very specific stages of progress out from under the grasp of the bonds are spelled out, there is also a very strong overall emphasis on the *aruḷ* or grace of God.

Just how much of the formulation of the theological movement that became Śaiva Siddhānta was centered in Citamparam is difficult to say. Meykaṇṭar himself was a Vēḷāḷa and may not have felt altogether comfortable in the atmosphere of Citamparam, which had so recently become realigned with the orthodox *brāhmaṇa* standards reflected in the *Śiva Purāṇa*. In a larger sense, however, Citamparam continued to be the Śaiva center, and the fourth teacher in the lineage from Meykaṇṭar, who wrote eight of the fourteen *sāstras* or theological treatises, was Umāpati Śivācārya, one of the temple priests of Citamparam. The initial discomfort of the temple priests at the development of this new theological school is evident from a well-known legend about Umāpati. The story is that when Umāpati as a young priest went out to learn the theological system from a non-*brāhmaṇa* teacher, he followed the usual custom of pupils and drank the buttermilk that fell from his master's hands.[39] From the point of view of the *brāhmaṇa* priests, this act was considered polluting and they suspended him from temple service. A reconciliation was later achieved, and he spent most of his life in a *maṭam* or study center, which still stands a half mile to the east of the temple.

His works include not only brilliant theological treatises in both Sanskrit and Tamil̲, but numerous devotional works, and the legend book of the temple called the *Kōyil Purāṇa*, which was discussed in the previous chapter. As we could see when examining that text, Umāpati clearly sought to make the traditional devotion to the image of Dancing Śivan̲ the practical expression of the Śaiva Siddhānta



Curved leg of Dancing Śivan̲ (worshipers often meditate on this leg of grace)

theological system. In his hymn entitled *Śrī Kuñcitānghristavaḥ* he expressed his devotion to the "curved leg" of grace, the left leg of the Dancing Image. In this Sanskrit hymn he carefully describes the detail of the daily ritual (see Story 1 where we included the translation of a few verses in the notes), which his Sanskrit-knowing audience would be intimately familiar with, and is able to meditate on the ritual in his search for the meaning of "grace." These reflections in turn assure us that the daily ritual performed in the temple is, in fact, *at least* as old as the fourteenth century and may be part of a very old and very special tradition of worship.

Uṇmaiviḷakkam or Lamp of Truth

One of the important early texts of Śaiva Siddhānta was the *Uṇmaiviḷakkam* or *Lamp of Truth* by Maṉavācakam Kaṭantār. This text takes the form of a simple instruction of Meykaṇṭar to the author and includes an interesting mixture of theology and practical religious instruction. In the middle of the fifty-four verses, the text has a central passage on the worship of the Dancing Image in which the specific features of that image are seen as leading the worshiper over certain specific hurdles in the path to salvation:

> O, my son, hear:[40]
> The Supreme Consciousness which dances in the soul is composed of the five syllables *śi-va-ya-na-ma*, for the purpose of removing our sins. verse (32)
>
> Hear how the Dance is performed! The holy dancing foot is *na*, the navel is *ma*, the strong shoulders *śi*, the face *va*, and the tuft *ya*. verse (33)
>
> The hand holding the drum is *śi*, the pointing hand is *va*, the hand held out in comfort is *ya*, the hand holding the fire is *na*, and the foot trampling down the demon Muyalaka is *ma*. verse (34)
>
> The fiery arch (*tiruvāci*) is the sound of *Om*; the sound that is never separate from the *Om* is the splendor contained within which is the dance of the Lord of the Little Hall. Those who get rid of their ego sense understand this. Understanding, they leave their bodies. verse (35)
>
> Creation arises from the drum; Protection proceeds from the hand of peace; from fire comes Destruction; from the flowery foot holding down the demon arises Stability; and from the foot held aloft comes Deliverance. verse (36)
>
> The Lord drums away the darkness of *māyā*, burns off the rope of *karma*, crushes down the selfishness of *āṇava*, splashes us with *aruḷ* or grace, and then plunges the *pacu* or soul into the ocean of bliss. This is the nature of his dance. verse (37)
>
> The silent sages, who have destroyed the three kinds of *malam*, have chosen to live in the place where their ego sense is destroyed. There they behold the sacred dance of the Lord of the Hall, the Lord whose very form is grace. verse (38)
>
> The One who is in reality beyond thought and speech graciously assumes the form of the five-syllable *mantra* in the Hall of Dance, where he is watched by his consort, Umā. Souls who behold this mystic dance will never know rebirth. verse (39)

"Philosophical Reflections on the Dancing God"

As we have seen, the Citamparam temple had a major role between the ninth and the twelfth centuries in forging a single Śaiva tradition for South Indian society, and in linking that tradition to the ruling power of the day, the Cōḻa Empire. For a couple of centuries after Cōḻa power began to fade, the temple had a less central role, and had to come to grips with the changing patterns in the ritual and theology of the larger tradition of Śaivism. By the sixteenth century another cultural situation began to emerge as newer, less sectarian, philosophical interests became prominent in the area, and the Dancing Image of Citamparam became the focus of a new form of mystical reflection. These reflections are for the most part influenced by the school of Vedānta, which was the most notable of the philosophical currents of the day, but in an important sense the Vedāntic tone of the reflections is nonsectarian and they were not considered a direct challenge to the Śaiva Siddhānta theology, which continued to be the official theology of South Indian Śaivism.

The philosophical school of Vedānta traces its origins to the *Upaniṣads*, which expound philosophical teachings included by the Indian tradition in the Vedic corpus of texts. The actual philosophical formulation of the system of Vedānta known as Advaita is associated with Śaṅkara, who is usually thought to have lived in the eighth and ninth centuries. Although born in South India, he had no known contact with Citamparam, and for the most part his ideas were not taken up by those involved in the struggles for control of religious institutions until the fourteenth century, when the ascetics of the Śṛṅgeri *maṭam* in the Vicayanakaram capital undertook the systematic propagation of his system. The details of Citamparam's contact with this movement are not known, but two important changes took place in the ritual of Citamparam at about this time, which, as we noted in Story 3, would seem to imply an acknowledgment of the Vedāntic ideas on worship.

One change was the introduction of the Rahacya (Sanskrit: *Rahasya)* form of worship in which the worshiper stands at the screen to the west of the Dancing Image and worships the transcendent or formless manifestation of the deity expressed in the darkness there. The other change was the introduction of numerous reflections on the name of the place itself. As we explained earlier the older descriptive name for the central shrine was Ciṟṟampalam or "Little Hall," which during the early history of the temple complex was similar to the descriptive naming of other buildings such as "Big Hall" and "Opposite Hall." The name Ciṟṟampalam was later rendered in Sanskrit as *Cit-ambaram* or "consciousness-ether" or "consciousness-space." As people reflected on this name "Citamparam" became understood as the "heart" of the cosmic man, and the worship came to be seen as *dahara upāsana* or "meditation on the heart cavity." This kind of reflection in turn allowed the worship to be interpreted as creating an awareness of one's *cit* as the *ātman* that is one with the ultimate *Brahman*.[41] These changes in nomenclature were ultimately very far-reaching, and the temple's earlier name of "Tillai" came to be used less and less and to be replaced by the name "Citamparam" or, in Sanskrit, "Cidambaram."

In the popular consciousness these forms of philosophical meditation were captured by thinking about the positioning of the *vastu puruṣa* or "primal man," which medieval architectural tradition used to outline the floor plan of a temple. In Citamparam the "primal man" is thought of as spread diagonally across the temple grounds with its head in the northwest. This allows the "heart" to be exactly within the Cit Sabhā where the Dancing Lord resides.

Appayya Dītcitār

Appayya Dītcitār (1552–1624) was in many ways typical of the philosophical giants of Vedānta. He took as his mentor the renowned Śrīkaṇṭa, whose *Śivādvaita* represents the classic statement of an Advaita position that is acceptable to Śaivas. In the way Appayya interpreted that position, it was rather close to the Viśiṣṭādvaita of Rāmānuja in that the *sādana* of the worshiper was in some sense real and effective in the achievement of salvation. The meditation that Śrīkaṇṭa and Appayya encouraged was an extension of the reflection in Upaniṣadic passages such as *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.1.1 on the "ether within the heart." This reflection on the *dahara* or small and subtle linked up nicely with the tradition of thinking of Śivan̲'s dance as taking place in the "Little Hall" and in the open space or *ākāca* (Sanskrit: *ākāśa)*. Appayya could now use a term such as *cit-amparam* in a fully theological sense to mean "expanse of consciousness," and at the same time mean that it was meditation in the temple of Citamparam that allowed one to know the subtle form of the Eternal Spirit.[42]

In religious practice Appayya was, like all Vedāntins, not really a partisan Śaiva, and in Citamparam he worshiped both Naṭarājan̲ and the Vaiṣṇava image of Gōvintarājan̲. He was particularly fascinated with the proximity of the images of Naṭarājan̲ (Śivan̲) and Gōvintarājan̲ (Viṣṇu):

> I bow to the Lord of Mā [lakshmī] and to the Lord of Umā, the god with the hooded snake as his couch, and the god who wears the hooded snake as his ornament, the destroyer of the demon Mura and the destroyer of the demons of Pura [tripura], the opponent of the demon Bāṇa and the opponent of Asamabāṇa [kāma]. Let him wear yellow or the four quarters, let him ride an eagle or a bull, let him sleep or dance on the stage, I see no difference in the Almighty.[43]

Nevertheless, it was on the image of Naṭarājan̲ that he focused as death approached. One of his late poems celebrates the *apiṭēkam* or bath during the cold of the Mārkal̲i festival where he says:

> On your head you have the cool stream of Gangā and the chilly moon, on your hands and feet there are slimy cold snakes, the left half of your body holds the daughter of the snow-clad mountain who is herself eternally moist with mercy, and on your entire body is the cold sandal paste. O Lord of the golden hall, how have you the power to bear this excessive cold? Why do you not resort to dwell eternally in my heart, which is ever ablaze with despair?

And his final words, as he entered the inner sanctum never to be seen again:

> This holy city of Citamparam is renowned. Its residents have both humility and devotion. I have composed a few works. I am more than seventy years of age, a ripe age at which to pass away. I have no desires other than to see the holy feet of Naṭarājan̲.[44]

Later Centuries

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the flood of poetry and music about the beauty of Citamparam continued in both Tamil̲ and Sanskrit. Many of these poems are now quoted by people even in casual conversation, but it is not yet clear which will become part of the enduring stream of tradition. In many of the Sanskrit verses there appears to be a move away from the older mythic images that characterized the earlier poetry, and an attempt to describe the experience before the Dancing Image in new ways.

The Sanskrit poem *Chidambarastava*, for instance, speaks about the rapture that comes from the sound of the anklets:

> During the Dance of Bliss, the jingling anklets of the Lord of Dance cause one joy, madness, confusion, make one's hair stand on end, and flood one's eyes.[45]

The *Tatvāryāstava*, also in Sanskrit, speaks about the different emotions that the worshiper experiences in the presence of the dance. Here especially one notices that there is a notable absence of specifically Śaiva theological language.

> May the residue of the cool breezes of the *tillai* forest, after being drunk deep by the snake jewels adorning Śivan̲, and rendered cool by the spray drops from the dancing waves of the Gangā on the crest of the dancing Naṭarājan̲, purify me.
>
> When shall my ear experience the sound of the anklets tinkling sweetly, *jhall, jhall, jhall*, at the commencement of the dance by the Emperor of the Golden Hall?
>
> May the particles of ash, scattered in the energy of the dance, and mingled with the saffron on the breast of the daughter of the Lord of the Mountains, fall on my limbs and make me pure.
>
> O moon-crested Lord, any human who has not experienced your Dance of Bliss should not be considered by the wise to have even been properly born.[46]

Tamil̲ poems of the same period tend to continue to speak more in traditional theological language. In the following well-known poem of Kumarakuruparar entitled *Citamparamummaṇikkōvai* we see, for instance, the traditional reference to the "five acts":[47]

> O my Lord, your hand holding the sacred drum has made and ordered the heavens and the earth, and the innumerable souls and the inumerable worlds. Your lifted hand protects both the conscious and nonconscious parts of your creation. All these worlds are then transformed again by your hand bearing fire. Your sacred foot, planted on the ground, provides an abode for the tired souls struggling in the course of action or *karma*. It is your lifted foot that grants eternal bliss to those who approach you. The five actions are your handiwork.[48]

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, religious leaders in South India have thought of themselves as "reformers" dealing with the intellectual challenge posed by the exposure to Western ideas. Citamparam and its traditions have been used as a base for some of these reformers. The great Śrī Laṅka reformer, Aramuka Navalar, brought his busy life of publishing to a *maṭam* in the town of Citamparam. The famous Tamil̲ saint, Ramalinga Swamigal, spent his early life in Citamparam, and when he established his own place in Vadalur he put up a temple exactly like the Cit Sabhā and introduced a form of worship without images. In the end he locked himself in his hut beside the temple for a year so that he might be united with the deity, and when it was later opened the hut was empty.

The great revival of Carnatic music in the nineteenth century was in many ways tied to Citamparam. The great composer, Muthuswami Dikshitar, composed dozens of pieces directly set for moments in the ritual worship of Naṭarājan̲. One of the most beloved of Tamil̲ operas is the Nandanar Charitram of Gopalakrishna Bharati, which elaborates on the story of the watchman who could never get to see the Dancing Image until he was found one day in the sacrificial fire of the priests.

Ananda Coomaraswamy

Finally, in the twentieth century the image of Dancing Śivan̲ has started to be recognized as part of a new, worldwide set of cultural symbols. One of the most brilliant of the ambassadors of Indian thought at the turn of the century was Ananda Coomaraswamy, whose religious heritage was the Tamil̲ Hindu environment of Śrī Laṅka, but who spent most of his life writing for Western audiences. In a well-known essay entitled "The Dance of Shiva" he set out a philosophical reflection on the Dancing Image that is in a very traditional Vedāntic mode and yet reaches out with great poetic insight to his Western readers:

> Śiva is the Eros Protogonos of Lucian, when he wrote: "It would seem that dancing came into being at the beginning of all things, and was brought to light together with Eros, that ancient one, for we see this primeval dancing clearly set forth in the choral dance of the constellations, and in the planets and fixed stars, their interweaving and interchange and orderly harmony."
>
> I do not mean to say that the most profound interpretation of Śiva's dance was present in the minds of those who first danced in frantic, and perhaps intoxicated energy, in honour of the pre-Aryan hill-god, afterward merged in Śiva. A great motif in religion or art, any great symbol, becomes all things to all men; age after age it yields to men such treasure as they find in their own hearts. Whatever the origins of Śiva's dance, it became in time the clearest image of the *activity* of God which any art or religion can boast of. . . .
>
> Now to summarize the whole interpretation, we find that the essential significance of Śiva's dance is threefold: First, it is the image of his Rythmic Play as the Source of all Movement within the Cosmos (which is represented by the Arch); Secondly, the Purpose of his Dance is to Release the countless souls of men from the Snare of Illusion; Thirdly, the Place of the Dance, Chidambaram, the Center of the Universe, is within the Heart. . . .
>
> In the night of Brahmā, Nature is inert, and cannot dance till Śiva will it: He rises from His rapture, and dancing sends through matter pulsing waves of awakening sound, and Lo, matter also dances appearing as a glory round about Him. Dancing, He sustains its manifold phenomena. In the fulness of time, still dancing, he destroys all forms and names by fire and gives new rest. . . .
>
> It is not strange that the figure of Naṭarāja has commanded the adoration of so many generations past. . . .
>
> We are worshipers of Naṭarāja still.[49]

Conclusion

The interchange of saintly voices and the echoing walls of the Citamparam temple are like a musical composition in which instrument after instrument takes on the challenge of the rhythms sustained by the drummer. It is as if it takes both people and a place to make a religious tradition. The people reflect their age and their intellectual background, but come to the place of worship longing to see there the distant past and the framework of eternity. The songs of the poet-saints belong, on the one hand, to their story and the history of their religious awareness, but at the same time they belong to Citamparam and the accumulated story of how people understood their encounter with the divine in that place.

In presenting the story of the poet-saints here as a story of the encounters with the divine in Citamparam, we have, of course, made them appear much more similar than they might in other contexts. We have, in fact, provided them with four labels that they would no doubt want to disown, for the labels tell us more about the stages in the growing tradition of Citamparam spirituality than they do about the specific nature of the vision of each poet-saint. What the labels do bring out, however, is the extent to which even the frameworks in which we understand religious life to take place are changing, flexible things, molded by history. In looking at the record of this temple, it is not meaningful to ask, Was this a Śaiva temple? on the assumption that we can assume the ''framework'' called ''Śaivism'' to have the same structure in each generation. ''Śaivism'' as an authoritative theological tradition refers in South India to the Śaiva Siddhānta system developed since the thirteenth century. Using other frameworks it could refer to early devotional attitudes, to court-sponsored ritual behavior, to prescribed priestly canons, or to the more open spirituality of someone like Coomaraswamy. By identifying the four most prominent ''frameworks'' into which the contributions of the saints were put in the communication networks Citamparam was associated with, we have organized their contributions to some extent while at the same time suggesting that there was no single tradition in terms of which they might all be judged.

The ''Early Expressions of Faith'' are really an amazingly rich collection of faith expressions, which did not think of themselves as part of a common tradition. Tirumūlar, Māṇikkavācakar, and the three *Tēvāram* singers each represent complex intellectual heritages, but they were separated by sufficient time and space that they come to Citamparam as voices echoing different tunes. Drawn by the mystery of the Dancing Image and the unique community that attended it, their praises were eventually to form the foundation of a common tradition centered on the worship of that deity. While it is tempting to emphasize their common reverence for the Dancing Image, it would be a mistake to neglect the extent to which Tirumūlar's faith is expressed in the precise language of the yogic *cittar*, Māṇikkavācakar's is characterized by the operatic play with the whole range of human emotion, and the *Tēvāram* singers focus their attention on the simple remembrance of the mythic stories and the obedience and loyalty that faith involves. Only in later reworking did these expressions of faith become linked with specific forms of cultic action or theological understanding, and it takes a specific reminder to recall that each of them came to Citamparam almost by accident and that the faith they expressed was richly colored by their unique heritages and their spontaneous response to the worship experience of the place.

During the next period of the "Court-Sponsored Forms of Faith" the individual acts of worship are no less genuine or spontaneous, but the framework of communication connected with the temple is dramatically changed in that every expression of faith is quickly incorporated into a royally controlled system of communication. In the early phase of this period Nampi's editing of the *Tēvāram* hymns and the life stories of the *nāyanmār* has the urgent character of an ideological movement rather like the Protestant Reformation in Europe, in that expressing faith is taken to be a public act addressed to the politically defined community. In the immediately succeeding period, when the focus shifts away from Citamparam during the reigns of Rājarāja I and Rājēndra I, the communication network is more literally court-sponsored in that the court plans in great detail for the temples that are built, the recitations that are held, and the ritual patterns the priests are to follow. The hymn of the prince Kaṇṭarātitya, while itself reflecting the more ideological tone of the era of his father and grandfather who were propagating the worship at Citamparam, was, nevertheless, incorporated by his widow Cempiyan and his nephew Rājarāja into the official canon of faith (eventually included in the ninth book of the *Tirumuṟai*), which was no doubt developing under the sponsorship of their court. Cēkkiḻār's great literary piece was, of course, directly court-sponsored in form, but by the time of the Later Cōḻas the ideological energy of the court was fading, and the faith he expressed was more a preview of the newer theological concerns of the day than it was a serving of the interests of the court. Especially in his opening passage he was concerned to lend his weight to the arguments later put forward in the *Citamparamāhātmya* and *Kōyil Purāṇa* that the local priesthood had both Vedic and Ākamic credentials and performed all the rituals in the prescribed manner.

With the breakup of the Cōḻa Empire, it was natural that the tradition would look for a new center of gravity. The "Theologically Formulated Expressions of Faith" which characterized the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries produced massive amounts of literature and remind Western scholars, influenced by the example of the Reformation in Europe, of the kind of faith expression that is typical of the "world religions." Actually in Citamparam the period is one characterized more by confusion than creativity, as the two different culture bases in North and South India came to clash and put forward conflicting claims of authority. The situation was highly complex in that the claim of the Sanskritic group dealt more with the lines of authority in performing temple ritual, while that of the Tamiḻ group was based on a logically demonstrable theological argument and explicit exercises in spiritual development. The conflicting claims were never put to a clear test, and the Citamparam temple, without the centralizing backing of political leadership, became only one of the many centers where the contest was formulated but never resolved.

By the sixteenth century, as this theological challenge passed, Citamparam became the focus of the eloquent but somewhat peripheral "Philosophical Reflections on the Dancing God." It is a somewhat surprising feature of the religious history associated with Citamparam that much of the elegant symbolic language now associated with the Dancing Image is a product of a fourth period in its history:

after it had served as a home of the great hymn singers; after it had provided religious legitimation for the Cōḻa Empire; and even after it was the base for the formation of the major theological trends of the region. Through those eras of glory, the town was generally known as Tillai and the hall was known as Ciṟṟampalam or Little Hall. The philosophical reflections on the nature of *cit*, *ākāca*, *dahara*, *rahacya*, and the like eventually became the primary symbols associated with, at least, the pilgrim worship in the place, and the name "Citamparam" became standard. What is most interesting about this fourth framework of "philosophical reflection" is that, in an odd way, it anticipated modern modes of consciousness in the way it insisted on being unattached to any historical community, and sought to express truths that were psychologically convincing but bore no other authority. This unusually modern spirit made it natural for Ananda Coomaraswamy in the present century to set forth the meaning of the Dancing Image in eclectic language borrowed from many cultures, and it has even allowed worshipers from many non-Indian cultural backgrounds to find their own, very modern, meanings in the image of the Dancing God.

Notes

1. Notable examples were Jalauka, the son of the Mauryan Buddhist emperor Aśoka, who was a convert to Śaivism and ruled in Kashmir; Śantamūla, who was an Ikshvāku king in Andhra; and Śaśānka, who ruled in Gauda Dēsa in the sixth century.

2. In Story 4 we discussed these political developments in more detail. I have in mind here the sequential emergence of Pāṇṭya, Pallava, and then Cōḻa power in the course of the first millennium of the common era.

3. See Clothey 1982.

4. I have followed the account of the thirteenth-century *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam* by Perumpaṟṟappuliyūr Nampi. The complicated problem of the dating of Māṇikkavācakar is taken up in a later note.

5. The story of the conversion of a Pallava king is part of Śaiva tradition found, for instance, in Cēkkiḻār's *Periya Purāṇa*. The famous inscription of Mahendravarmaṉ r. 590–630 in the cave in Tirucirapaḷḷi clearly says that he was a convert to Śaivism, and his drama *Mattavilāsa* certainly reveals a person very knowledgeable about religious matters. Even a century later, however, we see the Chinese pilgrim Hsuan Tsang reporting that in the city there were 100 Buddhist monasteries, and 80 Hindu temples, but the vast majority were still Jainas. See Thomas Watters 1904–5. For recent debates on the Pallavas of this period, see K. R. Venkṭaraman 1968; Lockwood, Siromoney, and Dayanandan 1974; Nagaswamy 1978; and Lockwood and Vishnu Bhat 1981.

6. On Vēḷāḷa agriculturalists generally, see Stein 1977; on the early stone temples and their predecessors, see Baḷasubrahmanyam 1971.

7. Unless otherwise noted, the texts here are freely paraphrased by the author with the help of K. M. Venkataramiah, G. Subbiah, or K. Sivaraman. In most cases translations are not available and those that are vary greatly in readability. By using a fairly standard style of paraphrasing the reader should find the texts easier to read.

The edition of the text used here is *Tirumantiram* (1979).

There is little basis for establishing a date for Tirumūlar. He clearly predates the eighth century when he was listed in Cuntarar's list of *nāyanmār*. The *cittar* tradition he represents might be reflected a bit in Mahendravarman's *Mattavilāsa* of the seventh century. The tradition, however, usually places him much earlier, perhaps as early as the third century.

8. On the priests see Story 1. The reference in Appar is VI.3, and in Campantar it is I.10.

9. This tradition was set out in written form in the thirteenth-century *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam.*

10. On page xvii of his widely read translation of the *Tiruvācagam* (1900), Pope says: "we can only discern the dimmest outline of his figure amid the mists of South-Indian poetical tradition. . . . As he evidently flourished at the time when the influence of Buddhism in South India was decaying, if not dying out, there is good reason to suppose that he lived somewhere about the seventh or eighth century of our era. . . . The *Tiru Viḷaiyāḍal* is full of the most extraordinary stories, from which it is well-nigh impossible to sift out any grains of historical truth."

Even in his iconoclasm he then goes on in a note on the next page (p. xviii) to follow the tradition and date Māṇikkavācakar nine kings, or 150 to 200 years, before Campantar. But, alas, he places Campantar in the eleventh century, when more recent scholarship has produced overwhelming evidence that Campantar is of the seventh!

11. Scholars who were impressed by Pope's dismissal of the traditional materials noted two other points that seemed to push Māṇikkavācakar's date even later: he was not listed in Cuntarar as a *nāyaṉmār*, and his poetry was so sophisticated. A scholarly debate started to rage with historians finding in the tangled lists of Pāṇṭya and Śrī Laṅka kings someone who might correspond to the "Varakuṇa" and "Arikēsari" mentioned by Māṇikkavācakar, or the Śrī Laṅka king whose dumb daughter was healed by Māṇikkavācakar, and looking here and there for other scraps of evidence.

Srinivasa Pillai, *Tamiḻ Varalāṟu* in the 1920s put forward the arguments for a late date, and many of these were echoed in Zvelebil 1973. The arguments for an early date were put forward in Vedachalam 1930 and 1967 and some of them are reiterated in Narayana Ayyar (1939) 1974.

The central problem in the whole discussion is that Māṇikkavācakar never mentions the Tēvāram singers, and from among them only Appar makes a possible allusion to him (in IV.2 where he alludes to the story of how jackals were turned into horses). In the light of the fact that the later tradition reveres *both* Māṇikkavācakar and the Tēvāram singers, it seems odd that neither thinks of the other as within the exact same religious and political tradition and therefore neither acknowledges the other as forerunner. If, however, we look at the historical situation free of the influence of the later tradition, it becomes clear that they did, indeed, belong to two different settings, with Māṇikkavācakar representing a Pāṇṭya tradition of mystical devotion in competition with Buddhists, and the Tēvāram singers representing a Cōḻa tradition with a devotional emphasis and with competition from the Jainas.

Once that historical difference is acknowledged, the account of the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇa*, rather than representing unbelievable "poetical mists," makes eminent good sense in that it places Māṇikkavācakar nine kings or about two centuries before Campantar, whom we know lived in the seventh century. And with that "problem" cleared up the rest of Māṇikkavācakar's work seems much more understandable, for his challenge to Buddhism comes just when it was emerging as the dominant faith in nearby Śrī Laṅka, and his poetic brilliance can be reexamined as a late product of the Caṅkam age poetry, with which he shares so much.

12. In a recent article, Harman (1987) carefully discusses the different versions of the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇa.*

13. This part of the story has become recognized as a major revelatory event on its own and is regularly celebrated in festival dramas, especially in Maturai.

The author witnessed a festival drama on this story some distance away in the Tiruvāṉaikkā temple of Tirucirapaḷḷi.

14. Vanmikanathan 1970; 1971. For somewhat different interpretations, see Ratna Navaratnam (1963) 1975; 1982.

15. For this text I have made an exception to the practice of making my own loose paraphrase of a text and offer the famous "turn-of-the-century" translation of G. U. Pope (1900).

16. See Subbiah 1988.

17. I refer here, of course, to the *aham* poems of the Caṅkam collection. See, for instance, Hart 1975, 1979b.

18. Śaiva women and girls generally sing the Tiruvempāvai, and Vaiṣṇava women and girls sing the Tiruppāvai of Aṇṭāḷ. This singing, which is generally in the early morning, is clearly an old tradition, and probably was a ritual activity that predates either author and provides an occasion for their hymns.

19. See Subbiah 1988.

20. Hardy 1983.

21. These confrontations are fully written up in the *Periya Purāṇa* of Cēkkiḻār, and the Campantar story is included in the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇa*, but they are alluded to elsewhere as well.

22. See, for instance, Otto 1930. Zaehner 1966 is typical of the usual textbook treatment.

23. Every hymn of Campantar has a verse late in the hymn mocking the Jainas for their dress, food, ethics, or philosophy. Appar usually has a similar verse. Cuntarar has somewhat fewer.

24. Appar wrote 8 of his 312 hymns in Citamparam, but there are no stories of his special attachment to the place. Campantar, who came from the neighboring town of Cirkāḻi and visited home frequently, wrote only 2 of his 383 hymns in Citamparam, and Cēkkiḻār tells the story of Campantar's hesitation about going there until in a nearby temple he had a vision of the priests of Citamparam as like the *gaṇas* or heavenly agents of Śivaṉ. Cuntarar has only one hymn in Citamparam, but the dramatic story of his being ordered by Śivaṉ himself to list the *Antaṇar* or priests of Citamparam first in his list of saints links him with the place (although it may also reflect his hesitation as well).

25. The source of this biography is Cēkkiḻār's *Periya Purāṇa* written in the twelfth century.

The text of the hymns is from *Tirunāvukkarsu Suvāmikaḷ Tēvāram* (1976).

26. Campantar's life story is the longest in the *Periya Purāṇa*, and the Maturai part is also recorded in the *Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇa*. Other songs and literary pieces celebrate his life as well.

27. Referred to in Zvelebil 1973.

28. This story is from the *Periya Purāṇa*.

The text of the hymns is *Tiruñānacampanta Suvāmikaḷ Tēvāram* (1971).

29. The framework of the *Periya Purāṇa* is the story of Cuntarar's being ordered to tell the life stories of the saints.

30. The text of the hymn is from *Cuntara Mūrti Cuvāmikaḷ Tēvāram* (1971).

31. While the textbooks portray them as "Protestant," "democratic" rebels against priestly authority, they would be better described as a militant sectarian vanguard of a newly defined cultural region with rapidly increasing economic and political power. By the same token while the textbooks would portray them as a liberating "movement" (the "*bhakti* movement") that soon "spread" to the North, the circumstance that accounts for their prominence in the South was not sudden popularity but the Cōḻa state's sponsorship of the formation of the canon and the ritual activity of reciting the canon. Any impact on devotional movements many centuries later in the North would have been at most indirect.

32. As noted in Story 1 this tradition has been modified slightly in Citamparam since

1990 in that the Ōtuvār are now allowed to sing from the Kanaka Sabhā or the porch of the central shrine.

For an account of present-day recitation practices in the Śrīraṅkam temple of Viṣṇu, see Younger 1982c.

33. The text of the hymn is from *Tiruvicaippā* (1974).

34. The full inscriptional record is found in *South Indian Inscriptions* vol. 2. For discussion, see Stein 1980.

35. The story of how that recitation took place is itself the subject of a full story set down by Umāpati in the fourteenth century in the *Cēkkiḻār Nāyanār Purāṇam*.

36. Some verses of this hymn were cited in Story 1. The text is from *Periya Purāṇa* (1974).

37. Scholarly work on the *ākamams* is extensive, but a full collection of manuscripts has yet to be completed and the dates of their composition is widely disputed. What is important for the history of South Indian Śaivism is that it was in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries that they came to be referred to regularly. See *Rauravāgama* (1961) and Sivaraman 1973.

38. *Śiva Purāṇa* (1970).

39. These stories are from the *Santācārya Purāṇa* of Swami Natha Desikar of the eighteenth century (cited in Sastri (1935) 1975), but they are alluded to in other places and appear to be old stories.

40. *Uṇmai Viḷakkam* (1897).

Parts of this famous hymn have been translated in Zvelebil 1985, pp. 56–57; Dhavamony 1971, p. 257; and Coomaraswamy 1924, p. 61.

41. Somasundaram (1955) 1963, p. 70n) summarizes his earlier study (1932) in which he analyses an even more esoteric or *tantric* interpretation of the symbolism of the central shrine. This kind of interpretation is found in the Sanskrit texts *Pundarikapuram Māhātmya* and *Tillaivana Māhātmya*. He does not discuss the date of these texts, but they could be from the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries when such speculations come to be referred to in popular literature.

42. A definitive study of Śrīkaṇṭa is Suryanarayana Sastri 1972 and for Appaya is Suryanarayana Sastri 1974. See also K. Sivaraman forthcoming.

43. *Appayyadīkshitendravijaya*, p. 79, quoted in Sivaramamurti 1974, p. 41.

44. Quoted in Natarajan 1974, p. 126.

45. Paraphrase based on text in Sivaramamurti 1974, pp. 131–32.

46. Paraphrase based on text in Sivaramamurti 1974, pp. 131–32.

47. A typical late medieval Tamiḻ reflection on the nature of the "five acts" of Naṭarājaṉ is evident in the pilgrim routes of that day which took the Naṭarājaṉ worshipper to six different temples in Tamiḻnāṭu: Tirunelvi for the Kalika or Muni *taṇṭava* or the dance of "creation"; Tirupputtur for the Gouri *taṇṭava* or the dance of "preservation"; Kāñcīpuram for the Samhara *taṇṭava* or the dance of "destruction"; Tirukkurtalam for the Tripura *taṇṭava* or the dance of "concealment"; Tiruvalangadu for the Ūrdhva *taṇṭava* or the dance of "grace"; and, finally, Citamparam for the Ānanda *taṇṭava* where all five of Śivaṉ's actions are found together.

48. Translated by Coomaraswamy 1924, p. 60.

49. Coomaraswamy 1924, pp. 56–66.

Conclusion

Hinduism is a religion of temples. The picture sometimes still found in textbooks, which described Hinduism developing around a reading of the *Vedas*, was the result of Western Protestant scholars such as Friedrich Max Müller and others who described what they wished Hinduism had become. Continued research has shown that worshipers in India have probably always worshiped in small shrines where they set up a variety of icons and carried on an even greater variety of ritual acts. When landlords and kings started assisting in the construction of these shrines, during the early centuries of the common era, some of the shrines became great stone temples and the ritual, hymnody, and theology associated with them became quite elaborate.

Understanding what goes on in a Hindu temple has not been easy for a scholarly tradition rooted in the Western Protestant understanding of religion, which tended to emphasize the written word. Max Müller and others of his generation did not really try to understand temple life in India and satisfied themselves that it was all "superstition," characteristic of an age of darkness. Missionaries who were often widely traveled in India sometimes realized that there was more to temple worship than superstition and they gave us a few descriptive accounts of temple life, but they were not really free to take it too seriously either. Generally what one ended up hearing was that the temples were "dark" and full of "avaricious" and "ignorant" priests.

Fortunately, the scholarly attitude toward temple life has changed. The Durkheimian approach to religious life has taught scholars that ritual acts are often the primary basis of religious understanding. And extensive travel to every corner of the Indian subcontinent for a couple generations has allowed people from all over the world to come into contact with the worship experience of the Hindu temple. What these travelers have found has reminded many of the grandeur of the medieval European cathedral, and has left almost all with a fascination for what appears to be a carefully cultivated development of the aesthetic and religious imagination. Now a generation of scholars from India and every other corner of the world has begun what promises to be the richly rewarding task of uncovering exactly what it is that the human spirit has set in place in this most interesting religious institution.

Citamparam has been a hospitable example of a Hindu temple for the scholarly community to examine. The historical records are abundant; the priestly community has been receptive; and the fascination independently associated with the image of the Dancing Śivaṉ provides a specific impetus for wanting to know "what goes on in Citamparam." There are at least three important dimensions to answering that question: the temple is of great historical significance in that the temple tradition preserves the memory of the kings who have worshiped there and the different branches of Śaivism that have sought recognition there; the temple has been the home of profound religious vision in that the image of the Dancing God continues to be the focus of thoughtful expressions of spiritual understanding; and the temple has for almost two thousand years provided an institutional base around which a society could continually rebuild its sense of self-understanding and social identity.

Historical Significance

At first glance one might think that the historical significance of the Citamparam temple derives from the fact that for centuries it was closely associated with the Cōḻa rulers. The situation is more complex than that, however, for our research has shown that the temple was independently established well before the Cōḻas came to power in the ninth century, and that it had significant contacts with Kaḷabhra, Pāṇṭya, Śrī Laṅka, and Pallava kings during those earlier centuries. Nevertheless it was the Early Cōḻas who put the gold shingled roof on the temple and used it to legitimize their climb to imperial status. While the Middle Cōḻas, Rājarāja I and Rājendra I, did not use the temple but tried to develop "royal temples" of their own, the Later Cōḻas during their long and peaceful rule spent much time there and made it the base of their high culture.

At least as important to the history of South India as its links with royalty was the fact that the temple came to serve as the center to which a great variety of Śaiva communities turned for recognition. Hindu religious history has never operated in terms of a hierarchy of religious authority such as characterized Western religious life, but there was a process of recognition involved in being associated with the central institutions, and for much of its history Citamparam was considered such a center. The process is fascinating to watch develop because it is never clearly dominated by the priests, the king, or the scholarly community, but all three have a role, and in a way all three submit their judgments to the worshiping public. The priests were probably themselves a *cittar* or "yoga" community that migrated into the area from the north, but they seem to have become fascinated quite early with the erotic mysticism of Māṇikkavācakar who was deeply rooted in the aesthetic and religious traditions of the deep South. The Cōḻa kings were initially interested in winning recognition for the *Tēvāram* hymn singers, the wandering peasant hymn singers of the Kāvēri valley, but they soon had to acknowledge that there were other traditions deeply rooted in Citamparam, and they too would continue. The scholars who arrived as pilgrims from North India some centuries later were initially inclined to brush aside much of the local tradition and introduce their own *liṅkam* cult, but they soon learned that there was much to be learned from what was already there. Even more formidable were the challenges of the Śaiva Siddhānta theologians and the advocates of Advaita Vedānta, but those schools eventually decided to place their bases of operation in *maṭams*, and agreed to share the worship traditions of the temple with the many other schools of Śaiva faith.

These struggles for control of the Śaiva community of faith are now largely a matter of history, as are the stories of kings, but one still senses the historic importance they once had as one worships in the temple. For the worshiper, the memories of kings and of great religious leaders who were associated with the place are not broken memories, because the worshiping community has remained in place over the centuries and the overall set of values to which those memories give expression has never been set aside. Actual kings are no longer available and great religious figures are no longer common, but the pageantry continues and the hymnody and theological vocabulary still resonate with meaning. To worship in Citamparam is to relive those memories.

Philosophical and Religious Vision

What makes any religious institution alive is the continuous recurrence of religious vision or religious experience. The Dancing Image of Śivaṉ Naṭarājaṉ has always inspired such experience. Māṇikkavācakar and Paṭañcali were inclined to weep with joy at the wonderful grace and energy involved in god's dancing the world into being before their very eyes. Tirumūlar looked with yogic concentration at the five stages in the cycle of cosmic ordering involved as the dance whirled through what he saw as discrete moments of creation, preservation, destruction, quiet, and gracious recreation. Later saints wondered at the wonderful ''emptiness'' or ''space'' surrounding the dancing figure and recognized the image as a representation of the human ''heart'' in which the divine dances freely even as the surrounding circle of the material body encloses it.

Worship in the temple is always a preparation for the experience of the Dancing God. The shrines of the different outer corridors provide the worshiper with an opportunity to prepare the five layers of the body for the wondrous and surprising energy experienced at the center. The festivals of the year provide a variety of opportunities for seeing the deity from different angles in different images and different social settings, so that one is prepared to experience the totality of the personality involved in the dance. And the marathon recitations and hymn sings prepare the mind in waiting and longing so that it melts in thanksgiving when the deity finally presents himself in his wondrous dance.

While the activities of worship are the human ways of preparing for the encounter with the divine, the grace of god alone makes it possible to witness the dance. The role of the witness is ultimately that of the goddess who has been chosen to be present at all times, but stories abound of others who have permanently entered into the presence of the deity because god wanted to take them into his activity. The Dancing Image is an image of action and energy, and to be part of the life of the temple is to be part of that action. The priests are the highest human example of those ''who never leave Citamparam,'' but many of the regular worshipers have the same sense of a pervading presence, which never allows them to leave once they have ''seen the feet of the Lord.''

Changing Social Identity

In Indian society a temple is intimately associated with the society that surrounds it. There is no independent structure of centralized religious authority, so that each segment of society "creates" itself around the temple it supports. In the *nāṭu* temples of this region that means that the Vēḷāḷa landlords usually invite all the different castes of a locality not only to worship in their own individual shrines but to join together in the *nāṭu* temple as well. In the case of Citamparam the situation was somewhat more complex. The temple was originally a small shrine of a special ascetic community that had migrated to the seacoast. It had, however, attracted a number of traveling princes and become the scene of a famous religious debate between a Buddhist and the Pāṇṭya king's minister Māṇikkavācakar on behalf of Śaivism. When the Early Cōḻa kings chose to put a gold shingled roof on the shrine it suddenly became a place where all classes from all regions of their far-flung domain felt they could go and enjoy the divine presence. The result was the creation of a new social identity which included everyone within that political domain, and even in a secondary way those in neighboring kingdoms who had become aware of the reputation of the temple.

The social identity that soon developed around the temple was an inclusive identity with a distinctive sense of openness. The king sought to have Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi edit the *Tēvāram* hymns and *nāyanmār* stories that had come from his realm, but the priests hesitated long enough to indicate that the social and religious identity they represented was a wider and more open one. Later kings struggled with the problem as they sought to "limit" the social identity of the temple to their own political domain, but other kings found a ready welcome there, and pilgrims from far away soon realized they could not only visit the temple but leave their inscriptions on the wall as well. When the political order of the area collapsed altogether in the fourteenth century, the Vēḷāḷa landlords began keeping a closer hold on their donations by channeling them into the *maṭams* whose headship was in Vēḷāḷa hands, but again the temple "community" maintained its openness, as it attracted a new class of scholarly poets, and its festivals continued to hold the support of the lower classes who have never been drawn to the *maṭams*.

South Indian society has a reputation for an orderly set of mores, which cross class or caste lines and political boundaries as well. Some modern reformers have credited the book of proverbial wisdom, the *Tirukkural*, for that widespread sense of common culture, but while there may be some justice in that claim, there is little evidence that that book was well known through those many centuries. What is more likely is that the carefully sustained activity of the temple communities has provided the flexible form of social re-creation, which allows such an extensive social identity to renew itself over almost two millennia. Citamparam was in no sense the single or dominant institution in this elaborate system, but as a revered temple with one of the widest ranging circles of loyalty, it established the pattern that others sought to emulate.

In defining a temple tradition, it is important that all three of these factors be seen operating in conjunction with one another. The different kings and landlords and the different sectarian religious leaders bring their interests to bear on the tradition. In a healthy tradition no one of those interests comes to be dominant, but the priests or saints who are closest to the direct experience of the deity in the place insist that that experience or vision takes precedence over all else. And then around this experience of the divine, and rooted in the political and sectarian interests, a community develops that links its social identity to the temple tradition it has come to acknowledge. This, at any rate, was the pattern in Citamparam, and the example of that most distinguished religious tradition has shone now for almost two millennia, and continues to be a living tradition in which a great community of worshipers finds its joy (*ānanda*) and inspiration.

Bibliography

Acharya, P. K. 1921. *Indian architecture according to Mānasāra*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Annual Report on Epigraphy (ARE). 1887–. Madras: Archaeological Survey of India.

Appadurai, Arjun. 1978. Kings, sects and temples in South India, 1350–1700 A.D. In Burton Stein, ed., *South Indian temples*. New Delhi: Vikas, pp. 47–74.

———. 1981. *Worship and conflict under colonial rule: A South Indian case*. Cambridge South Asian Studies 27. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Arthaśāstra. tr. R. Shamasastry. 1915. Mysore: Mysore Printing and Publishing.

Arunachalam, M. 1979. *The Kalabhras in the Pandiya country and their impact on the life and letters there*. Journal of the Madras University 51. Reprint, Madras: University of Madras.

———. 1985. *The Śaiva Saints*. Tiruchitrambalam: Gandhi Vidyalayam.

———. 1988. The Andanar of Tillai and Dikshitar. *Śaiva Siddhānta*, Madras: University of Madras.

Aruvamuthan, T. G. 1962–65. The Nārāyana-Naṭarāja complex at Chidambaram. Madras: *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India* (Madras):81–104.

Balambal, V. 1976. Great women of the Chola dynasty. *Journal of Tamil Studies* 10:72–77.

Balasubrahmanyam, S. R. 1943. The oldest Chidambaram inscriptions. *Journal of Annamalai University* 12:106–118.

———. 1944. The oldest Chidambaram inscriptions. *Journal of Annamalai University* 13:55–91.

———.1971. *Early Chola temples (A.D. 907–985)*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.

———. 1977. *Middle Chola temples (A.D. 985–1070)*. New Delhi: Thomson Press.

———. 1979. *Later Chola temples (A.D. 1070–1280)*. New Delhi: Mudgala Trust.

Banerji, Projesh. 1985. *Nataraja: The dancing god*. New Delhi: Cosmo Publications.

Barrett, Douglas. 1965. *Early Cōḻa bronzes*. Bombay: Bhukbhai Memorial Institute.

———. 1974. *Early Cōḻa architecture and sculpture, 866–1014*. London: Faber.

Barua, B. M. 1946. *Aśoka and his inscriptions*. Calcutta: New Age Publishers.

Beck, Brenda. 1972. *Peasant society in Konku: A study of right and left subcastes in South India*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.

Brekenridge, Carol Appadurai. 1976. The Śrī Miṉākṣi Sundarēṣvarar temple: Worship and endowments in South India, 1833 to 1925. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Buddhadatta, A. P., ed. 1915–28. *Buddhadatta's manuals*, Parts I and II. London: Pāli Text Society.

Caṅkar̲apanirākaraṇam of Umāpati. Edited by T. P. Ramanatha Pillai. 1968. Madras: South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta Publishing Society.

Cēkkiḻār Nāyanār Purāṇam. Madras: Vittiyātu Pālan̲a Yantracālai. 1926.

Chandra, Pramod. 1975. *Studies in Indian temple architecture*. Poona: American Institute of Indian Studies.

Citamparamāhātmya. 1968. Edited by Somasekhara Dikshitar. Kadavasal: Sri Meenakshi Press.

Clothey, Fred W. 1982. *The many faces of Murukan: The history and meaning of a South Indian god*. The Hague: Mouton.

Clothey, Fred W., and J. Bruce Long, eds. 1983. *Experiencing Śiva: Encounters with a Hindu diety*. Columbia, Mo.: South Asia Books.

Coomaraswamy, Ananda. 1924. *The dance of Shiva*. New York: The Sunrise Turn. Reprinted in *The dance of Shiva: Fourteen Indian essays*, 66–78. New York: Noonday Press, (1957) 1962.

Cuntara Mūrti Cuvāmikaḷ Tēvāram. 1971. Madras: Tiruppan̲antāḷ Kācimaṭattu Atipar.

Cutler, Norman Joel. 1987. *Songs of experience: The poetics of Tamil devotion*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Datta, B. K. 1974. *Bengal temples*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal.

Desai, P. B. 1957. *Jainism in South India*. Sholapur: Jaina Samskrit Samrakshka.

Dessigane, R. 1960. *Les legendes Civaites de Kāñcipuram: Analyse de textes et iconographie*. Pondicherry: Institut français d'indologie.

Dessigane, R., P. Z. Pattabiramin, and J. Filliozat. 1964. *La legende des jeux de Civa a Madurai d'après les textes et les peintures*. Pondicherry: Institut français d'indologie.

Devasenapathy, B. A. 1958. *Śaiva Siddhānta: A study in the mysticism and theology of Śaivism*. Madras: University of Madras.

———. 1963. *Of human bondage and divine grace*. Śivajñān̲a Siddhiyār Endowment Lectures, 1959. Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Dhavamony, Mariasusai. 1971. *Love of god according to Śaiva Siddhānta: A study in the mysticism and theology of Śaivism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Diehl, Carl Gustav. 1956. *Instrument and purpose: Studies on rites and rituals in South India*. Lund: C. W. K. Gleerup.

Dumont, Louis. 1962. The conception of kingship in Ancient India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 4:48–77.

———. 1970. *Homo Hierarchicus*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Eck, Diana L. 1985. *Darśan*. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books.

Epigraphica Indica. 1892–. vols. I–XXX. Calcutta and Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India.

Fergusson, J. [1910] 1967. *History of Indian and eastern architecture*. 2. New Delhi: Manohar.

Filliozat, J. 1972. *Tiruppāvai d'Āṇṭāl*. Pondicherry: Institut français d'indologie.

———. 1983. The role of the Śaivagamas in the Śaiva ritual system. In Fred Clothey and J. Bruce Long, eds., *Experiencing Śiva*. Columbia, Mo: South Asia Books, pp. 81–87.

Fuller, C. J. 1984. *Servants of the goddess: The priests of a South Indian temple*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gaston, Anne Marie. 1982. *Śiva in dance, myth and iconography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ghose, Rama. 1984. *Grace in Śaiva Siddhānta: A study in Tiruvaruṭpayan̲*. Varanasi: Ashutosh Prakashan Sansthan.

Gopinatha Rao, T. A. 1919–20. Anbil copper plates of Sundara Cola, the 4th year. *Epigraphica Indica* vol. 15, pp. 44–72.

Govindasamy, M. S. 1965. *The role of feudatories in Pallava history*. Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Gravely, F. H., and T. N. Ramachandran. (1934) 1977. *The three main styles of temple architecture recognized by the Silpa Sastras*. Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, vol. 3. Madras.

Habermas, Jurgen. 1979. *Communication and the evolution of society*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Hardgrave, Robert L., Jr. 1965. *The Dravidian movement*. Bombay: Popular Prakashan.

Hardy, Friedhelm. 1983. *Viraha-Bhakti: The early history of Kṛṣṇa devotion in South India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Harle, J. C. 1963. *Temple gateways in South India: The architecture and iconography of the Citambaram gopuras*. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer.

Harman, William. 1987. Two versions of a Tamil text and the contexts in which they were written. *Journal of the Institute of Asian Studies* 5:1–18.

———. 1989. *The sacred marriage of a Hindu goddess*. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

Hart, George L. 1975. *The poems of ancient Tamil: Their milieu and their Sanskrit counterparts*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

———. 1979a. The nature of Tamil devotion. In Madhav M. Deshpande and Peter E. Hook, eds., *Aryan and Non-Aryan in India*. Michigan Papers on South and Southeast Asia, 14. Ann Arbor Center for South and South East Asian Studies, 11–33.

———. 1979b. *Poets of the Tamil anthologies: Ancient poems of love and war*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Heesterman, J. C. 1957. *The ancient royal consecration*. The Hague: Mouton.

———. 1978. The connundrum of the king's authority. In J. F. Richards, ed. *Kingship and authority in South Asia*. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 4–26.

———. 1979. Power and authority in Indian tradition. In C. Moore, ed. *Traditional politics in South Asia*. New Delhi: Vikas.

Heras, H. 1927. *The Aravidu dynasty of the Vijayanagar empire*. Madras: B.G. Paul and Co.

Indian Antiquary. 1872–1923. Bombay: Archaeological Survey of India.

Inscriptions of the Pudukottai State. 1929. Pudukottai: Government Publication.

Inscriptions of the Pudukottai State. (tr. English) 1941. Pudukottai: Government Publication.

Jackson, William J. 1984. Tyāgarāja: Musician saint of South India. Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University.

Kailasapathy, K. 1968. *Tamil heroic poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Karashima, Noboru. 1984. *South Indian history and society: Studies from inscriptions A.D. 850–1800*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Kōyil Oḻuku. 1961. Translated and edited by V. N. Hari Rao. Madras: Rochouse and Sons.

Kōyil Purāṇa. 1968. Tiruvitaimarutūr: Sri Mahalinkasuvami Tēvastānam.

Kramrisch, Stella. (1946) 1976. *The Hindu temple*. 2 vols. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

———. 1981. *Manifestations of Śiva*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

———. 1981. *The Presence of Śiva*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Krishnaswami Aiyangar, S. 1921. *South India and her Muhammadan invaders*. New Delhi: Chand.

Kulke, H. 1970. *Cidambaramāhātmya*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

———. 1978a. *The Devarāja cult*. Data Paper 108, Southeast Asia Program. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

———. 1978b. Local networks and regional integration in Orissa: Ritual privileges of the feudatory Rajas of eastern India in the Jagannatha cult of Puri. In *The cult of Jaganath and the regional tradition of Orissa*. ed. Anncharlott Eschmann. New Delhi: Manohar, pp. 139–56.

Lockwood, Michael, Gift Siromoney, and P. Dayanandan. 1974. *Mahābalipuram studies*. Madras: Christian Literature Society.

Lockwood, Michael, Gift Siromoney, and P. Dayanandan. 1974. *Mahābalipuram studies*. Madras: Christian Literature Society.

Lockwood, Michael, and A. Vishnu Bhat. 1981. *King Mahendra's Mattavilāsa*. Madras: Christian Literature Society.

Lorenzen, David N. 1972. *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two lost Śaivite sects*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Loud, John A. 1990. The Dikshitars of Chidambaram: A community of ritual specialists in a South Indian temple. Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Mackenzie Manuscripts. 1972. Vol. 1. Edited by T. V. Mahalingam. Madras: University of Madras.

Mahābhārata. Critically edited by V. S. Sukthankar. 19 vols. Poona: Bhandarkan Oriental Research Institute. 1933.

Mahalingam, T. V. 1967. *South Indian polity*. Madras: University of Madras.

Majumdar, R. C. 1943. *History of Bengal*. Vol. 1. Calcutta and Dacca: G. Bharaduraj.

Marglin, Frederique Apffel. 1985. *Wives of the god-king: The rituals of the Devadasis of Puri*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

McKnight, Michael. 1979. The religious policy of the Guptas. Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University.

Meenakshisundaram, T. P. 1965. *A history of Tami̱l Literature*. Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Meister, Michael W., ed. 1984. *Discourses on Śiva: Proceedings of a symposium on the nature of religious imagery*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Merrey, Karen L. 1982. The Hindu festival calendar. In Guy R. Welbon and Glenn E. Yocum, eds., *Religious festivals in South India and Sri Lanka*. New Delhi: Manohar, pp. 1–27.

Minakshi, C. 1977. *Administration and social life under the Pallavās*. Madras: University of Madras.

Moody, Timothy. 1980. The Agneyadeya. Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University.

Mudaliar, Chandra. 1976. *State and religious endowments in Madras*. Madras: University of Madras.

Nagaswamy, R. 1978. Mahendra's inscription at Thiruchirapalli. In R. Nagaswamy, ed., *Studies in ancient Tami̱l law and society*. Madras: Tami̱lnāṭu State Department of Archaeology, pp. 21–30.

———. 1979. *Thiruttani and Velanjeri copper plates*. Madras: Tamilnāṭu State Department of Archaeology.

———. 1984. Iconography and significance of the Bṛhadīśvara temple, Tañjāvūr. In Michael W. Meister, ed., *Discourses on Śiva*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 170–81.

Naidu, Venkata Narayanaswami, Srinivasulu Naidu, and Venkata Rangayya Pantulu. 1936. *Tāṇḍava Lakṣaṇam, or the fundamentals of ancient Hindu dancing*. New Delhi: Manohar.

Narayana Ayyar, C. V. (1939) 1974. *The origin and early history of Śaivism in South India*. Madras: University of Madras.

Natarajan, B. 1974. *The city of the cosmic dance*. New Delhi: Orient Longman.

Navaratnam, Ratna. (1963) 1975. *Tiruvachakam: The Hindu testament of love*. Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.

Neevel, Walter. 1977. *Yāmuna's Vedānta and Pāncarātra: Integrating the classical and the popular*. Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press.

O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger. 1973. *Asceticism and eroticism in the mythology of Siva*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Otto, Rudolph. 1930. *India's religion of grace and Christianity compared and contrasted.* New York: Macmillan.

Parkhill, Thomas. 1980. The forest threshold: Princes, sages and demons in the Hindu epics. Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University.

Periya Purāṇa. 1974. Madras: Tirupanantāḷ Kācimaṭattu Atipar.

Peterson, Indira Viswanathan. 1982. Singing of a place: Pilgrimage as metaphor and motif in the *Tēvāram* hymns of the Tamil Śaivite saints. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 102:69–90.

———. 1983. Lives of the wandering singers: Pilgrimage and poetry in Tamil Śaivite hagiography. *History of Religions* 22:338–60.

———. 1986. Sanskrit in Carnatic music: The songs of Muttusvāmi Dīkṣita. *Indo-Iranian Journal* 29:183–99.

———. 1989. *Poems to Śiva: The hymns of the Tamil saints.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Podu Dikshitars of Chidambaram v. The Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (Administration) Department. Madras High Court, 1981.

Pope, G. U., trans. 1900. *Tiruvācagam.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Possehl, Gregory L., ed. 1979. *Ancient cities of the Indus.* New Delhi: Vikas.

Puṟanāṉūṟu Mūlam. Edited by a Board of Scholars. 1957 Madras: M.S. Rajam Publishers.

Ramachandran, T. N. 1958. *Buddhist sculptures from a stupa near Goli, and Nagarjunakoṇḍa.* Madras: Madras Museum.

Ramakrishnan Aiyer, V. G. 1946. *The economy of a South Indian temple.* Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Ramalinga, T. 1965. A study of Chidambaram and its shrine as recorded in Sanskrit literature. M.A. thesis, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar.

Raman, K. V., 1983. *Śrīnidhih: Perspectives in Indian archaeology, art and culture.* Madras: New Era.

Ramanujan, *A. K.* 1967. The interior landscape: Love poems from a classical Tamil anthology. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

———. 1973. *Speaking of Śiva.* Baltimore: Penguin.

———. 1981. *Hymns for the drowning: Poems for Viṣṇu by Nammālar.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

———. 1985. *Poems of love and war: From the eight anthologies and the ten long poems of classical Tamil.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Ramaswami, N. S. 1975. *Mamallapuram.* Madras: Tamilnāṭu Department of Archaeology.

Rauravāgama. 1961. Pondichery: L'Institut français d'indologie.

Ray, H. C., ed. 1959. *History of Ceylon.* Colombo: Ceylon University Press.

Rowland, B. (1953) 1967. *The art and architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain.* Baltimore: Penguin.

Sadaśiva Paṇḍarathār, T. V. (1949) 1967. *Pirkāla Cōlar Carittiram.* Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

———. 1950. *Pāndiyan Varalāru.* Madras: Saiva Siddhānta Nūrpatippuk Kalakam.

Sakalāgama Sāra Sangraha: A collection of essential quotations from all Śaiva Āgamas for temple worship. 1974. Madras: South Indian Archaka Sangham.

Samba Nataraja Dikshitar v. Kalyanasebesa Dikshitar. Madras Law Journal Reports, 1968.

Sastri, K. A. N. 1963. *Development of religion in South India.* Bombay: Orient Longman.

———. (1935, revised 1955) 1975. *The Cōlas.* Madras: University of Madras.

Sathianathaier, R. 1957. Historical Notes—(2): Patanjali and Chidambaram. In *Sundaram Pillai Commemoration Volume.* Madras: South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta Works Publishing Society.

Satyamurti, T. 1978. *The Nataraja temple.* New Delhi: Classical Publications.

Shulman, David Dean. 1980. *Tamil temple myths: Sacrifice and divine marriage in the South Indian Śaiva tradition*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Śiva Purāṇa. 1970. 4 vols. Edited by J. L. Shastri. Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology Series. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Śiva-ñāna-pōtam. 1948. Translated by Gordon Matthews. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sivaramamurti, C. 1956. *Amaravati sculptures in the Madras Museum.* Madras: Madras Museum.

———. 1974. *Nataraja in art, thought and literature*. New Delhi: National Museum.

———. 1976 *Śatarudrīya: Vibhūti of Śiva iconography*. Delhi: Abhinav.

Sivaraman, K. 1973. *Saivism in philosophical perspective*. Delhi: Motilal Banarasidass.

———. Forthcoming. The Sivadvaita of Srikantha: Spirit as the inner space within the heart. In K. Sivaraman, ed., *Hindu spirituality*. New York: Crossroads Press.

Somasundaram, J. M. 1932. Stalapuranas. *Journal of the Annamalai University* 1:141–44.

———. (1955) 1963. *Tillai-Chitrambalavan Koil Varalaru*. Translated and republished as *The university environs*. Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Soundara Rajan, K. V. 1969. "Cult" in the Pallava temples. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India* (Madras): Archaeological Society.

———. 1972. South *Indian temple styles*. Delhi: Manoharlal Munshiram.

South Indian inscriptions (SII). 1890–. Vols. I–XXIV. Madras: Archaeological Survey of India.

South Indian temple inscriptions. 1953, 1954, 1955, 1957. Vols. I, II, III.Pt.1, III.Pt.2. Edited by T. N. Subramuniam. Madras: Government Oriental Manuscripts Library.

South Indian temple sites. 1973. Srirangam: Sri Vani Vilas Press.

Spenser, George W. 1970. The sacred geography of the Tamil Shaivite hymns. *Numen* 17:232–44.

———. 1983. When queens bore gifts: Women as temple donors in the Chola period. In K. V. Raman, ed. *Śrīnidhiḥ*. Madras: New Era, pp.

Śrī Cidambara Kṣetra Sarvasvam. Vol. 1, *Śrī Patañjali Pūjā Sūtram*, and *Śrīman Sūtasamhitā-samgrahasca* (1977); vol. 2, *Śrī Citsabhesotsava Sūtram* (1982). Edited by Soma Sethu Dikshitar. Chidambaram: M. T. Trust.

Śrī Kuñcitāṅghristavaḥ. 1958. Edited with Tamil̲ translation by K. M. Rajakaneca Dīksitar. Chidambaram: Kirasvetu Press.

Śrī Sapānāyakkar Kōyil Cattam. (1849) 1966. Citamparam: Pandian Press.

Śrī Sapānāyakkar Kōyil Cattam. (1894). 1966. Citamparam: Pandian Press.

Srinivasa Pillai. 1920. *Tamil̲ Varalāṟu*. Madras: South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta Publishing Society.

Srinivasan, K. R. 1960. *Some aspects of religion as revealed by early monuments and literature of the South*. Madras: University of Madras.

Srinivasachari, C. S. 1941. Vignettes from the history of the Chidambaram shrine. In *Rajah Sir Annamalai Chettiar commemoration volume*. Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Stein, Burton, ed. 1978. *South Indian temples: An analytical reconsideration*. New Delhi: Vikas.

———. 1980. *Peasant state and society in medieval South India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Stock, Brian. 1983. *The Implications of literacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Subbiah, G. 1988. Religion and ritual in early South India: A study of Tamil classical texts. Ph.D. dissertation, McMaster University.

Subrahmaniya Pillai, G. 1965. Introduction and history of Śaiva Siddhānta. In *Collected lectures on Śaiva Siddhānta: 1946–1954*. Tiruppanandal Endowment Lectures, Lecture 1. Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Suryanarayana Sastri, S. S. 1972. *Śivādvaita of Śrīkaṇṭha*. Madras: University of Madras.

———. 1974. The Śivādvaita-Nirṇaya of Appayya Dikṣita. Madras: University of Madras.

Swamy, B. G. L. 1977. Sthalavrksas: Temple trees. *Transactions of the Archaeological Society of South India* (Madras).: Archaeological Society.

———. 1979. *Chidambaram and Naṭarāja: Problems and rationalization*. Mysore: Geetha Book House.

Tambiah, S. J. 1976. *World conqueror and world renouncer*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Tamil Lexicon. 1936. 6 vols and supplement. Madras: University of Madras.

Ten Pandiya copper plates. 1967. Madras: Tamil Varlatu Kazhagam.

Tesikar, Taṇṭapāṇi. 1949. *Chidambaram*. Dharmapuram: Dharmapuram Atinam.

———. 1967. *Ātalvallān̲*. Tiruvāvaturai: Tiruvāvaturai Ātinam.

Thapar, Romila. 1984. *From lineage to state*. Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Tirukkōvaiyār. 1970. Edited by P. Vē. Cōmacuntaran̲. Madras: South India Śaiva Siddhānta Works Publishing Society.

Tirumantiram. 1979. 2 vols. Edited by P. Rāmanāta Piḷḷai and A. Citamparanār. Tinnevelly: South India Śaiva Siddhānta Publishing Society.

Tirumur̲ai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam. 1964. Edited by Kumara Guru Paran Pillai. Sriraikunta. (published by editor).

Tiruñānacampanta Suvāmikaḷ Tēvāram. 1971. Madras: Tiruppan̲antāḷ Kācimaṭattu Atipar.

Tirunāvukkarsu Suvāmikaḷ Tēvāram. 1976. Madras: Tiruppan̲antāḷ Kācimaṭattu Atipar.

Tiruvācakam. 1968. Edited by Irāmanāta Piḷḷai. Pa. Madras: South India Śaiva Siddhānta Works Publishing Society.

Tiruvāyamol̲i. 1973. Edited by B. R. Purushothama Naidu. 10 vols., Madras: University of Madras.

Tiruvicaippā. 1974. Madras: Tirupan̲antāḷ Kācimaṭattu Atipar.

Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam: The Tiruvālavāyuṭaiyar Tiruviḷaiyātaṛpurāṇam of Cellinakar Perumpar̲r̲ap Puliyūr Nampi. 1906. Edited with commentary by U. Vē. Cāminātaiyar. Madras: Rippan̲ Acciyantiraccālai.

Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam: *Tiruviḷaiyātaṛpurāṇam Parañcōtimun̲ivar*. (1927) 1965. Madras: Ten̲n̲intiya Caiva Cittạ̄nta Nūrpatippu Kaḷakam.

Travancore Archaeological Series. 1910–41. 9 vols. Trivandrum: Travancore Government Publication.

Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, Edith, and Victor Turner. 1978. *Image and pilgrimage in Christian culture: Anthropological perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Uṇmai Viḷakkam. 1897. Madras: Meykaṇṭa Cāttiram.

Vālmīki-Rāmāyana. Critically edited by G. H. Bhatt, 6 vols. Baroda: Oriental Institute. 1960.

Vanmikanathan, G. 1970. *Maanickavaacagar, poet and mystic: An original interpretation of the Tiruvaacagam*. Tiruchirapalli: Tirukkural Prachar Sangh.

———, trans and ed. 1971. *Thiruvaachakam*. New Delhi: Delhi Tamil̲ Sangam.

Veḷḷaivāraṇaṇ, K. 1962, 1969. *Pan̲n̲iru Tirumur̲ai Varalār̲u*, Parts 1, 2. Annamalainagar: Annamalai University.

Vedachalam, Swami. (also known as Maṛaimalaiyātikaḷ). 1930. *St. Māṇikkavācakar: His life and times*. Pallavaram.

———. 1967. *Māṇikkavācakar Varalaṛu*. Madras: South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta Publishing Society.

Venkatachari, K. K. A. 1980. *The Maṇipravāla literature of the Śrivaiṣṇava Ācāryas: 12th–15th Century A.D.* Anantacharya Research Institute Series, no. 3. Bombay: Anantacharya Research Institute.

Venkataraman, B. 1976. *Temple art under the Chola queens*. Faridabad: Thomsen Press.

Venkataraman, K. R. 1973. *Dēvī Kāmākshī in Kāṇchī*. Śrīraṅgam: Śrī Vani Vilas Press.

Waghorne, Joanne P., and Norman Cutler, in association with Vasudha Narayanan, eds. 1985. *Gods of flesh, Gods of stone: The embodiment of divinity in India*. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima.

Watters, Thomas. 1904–5. *On Yuan Chwang's travels in India*. 2 vols. London: Royal Asiatic Society.

Wittfogel, Karl. 1970. *Oriental despotism*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Yocum, G. 1973. Shrines, shamanism and love poetry: Elements in the emergence of popular Tamil Bhakti. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 41:3–17.

———. 1974. Sign and paradigm: Myth in Tamil Śaiva and Vaiśnava *bhakti* poetry. In Harry M. Buck and Glenn E. Yocum, eds. *Structural approaches to South India studies*. Chambersburg, Pa.: Anima Books, pp. 184–206.

———. 1982. *Hymns to the dancing Śiva*. Columbia, MO: South Asian Books.

Young, Katherine. 1984. *Beloved places (Ukantaruḷinanilaṅkal): The correlation of topography and theology in the Śrivaiṣṇava tradition of South India*. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass.

Younger, Paul. 1980. A temple festival of Māriyammaṉ. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 48: 494–517.

———. 1982a. Ten days of wandering and romance with Lord Raṅkanātaṉ: The Pankuṇi festival in Śrīraṅkam temple, South India. *Modern Asian Studies* 16:623–56.

———. 1982b. The family of Śivaṉ in a South Indian grove. *Studies in Religion* 2:145–63.

———. 1982c. Singing the Tamiḻ hymnbook in the tradition of Rāmānuja: The *Adyayanōtsava* festival in Śrīraṅkam. *History of Religions* 20:272–93. Reproduced in George W. Spencer, ed., *Temples, kings and peasants*. Madras: New Era, 1987.

———. 1983. The role of landlords, kings and priests in the operation of a South Indian temple. In *Śrīnidhih*. K. V. Raman ed. Madras: New Era, pp. 243–56.

———. 1986. The Citamparam temple complex and its evolution, *East and West* 36:205–35.

Zaehner, R. C. 1966. *Hinduism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zelliot, Eleanor. 1976. The medieval Bhakti movement in history: An essay on the literature in English. In Bardwell L. Smith, ed., *Hinduism: New essays in the history of religions*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, pp. 143–70.

Zvelebil, Kamil V. 1973. *The smile of Murugaṉ: On Tamil literature of South India*. Leiden: E. J. Brill.

———. 1974. Tamil Literature. vol. 10. In Jan Gonda, ed., *A history of Indian literature*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz.

———. 1985. *Ananda-Taṇḍava of Śiva-Sadānṛttamūrti*. Madras: Institute of Asian Studies.

Index

abhiṣeka. See (Tamiḻ) *apiṭēkam*
Acyuta I (or Acyutatēvarāya), 17, 91, 112, 116
Advaita, 34–35, 220, 223. *See also* Śaṅkara; Vedānta
aesthetic sense, 115–16
aham, 58, 59, 172. *See also* caṅkam.
Aiyar community, 21, 22, 25, 40n.17, 40n.21. *See also* Śāskrikaḷ; Smārta Brāhmaṇas; Vāttiyār
Ākaman, 16, 24, 42n.32, 42n.33, 175, 192, 217, 218
  four topics: *kriyā, caryā, yoga, jñāa*, 16, 218. *See also* orthodoxy
ākāśa (space), 35, 84, 186n.12, 224, 229. *See also ampalam; dahara upāsana;* Rahacya
ampalam, 35, 84
ānanda tāṇḍava, 3, 66, 72, 74, 164–65, 183, 237. *See also ūrdhva tāṇḍava*
Ananta. *See* Paṭañcali
Anantēcuvaraṉ temple, 69, 186n.11. *See also* Paṭañcali
Anbil Copper Plates of Cuntara Cōḻa, 119n.21, 133. *See also* Ātitya I
Aṉi month, 49, 67
  eleventh century festival, 74n.3
  fourteenth century festival, description, 181
Annual Reports on Epigraphy, 40n.17
Antaṇar, 14, 15, 16, 208, 210, 211, 217. *See also* Dīṭcitar; Mūvāyiravar
Aṇṭāparaṇatēva, 31
Antarvedī, 43n.41, 175, 178. *See also* Dīṭcitar origin
anti-Brāhmaṇa politics, 18, 37–38, 148. *See also* Smārta Brāhmaṇa
apiṭēkam (bath), 25–30, 54, 61, 75n.21, 114, 224
  fourteenth century, 43n.39
  Great Festival, 63–64
  smaller celebrations, 67–68
Appadurai, A., 154n.24, 156n.64
Appar (or Tirunāvukkarsu), 49, 128
  and Campantar and Cuntarar, 14, 32, 83, 90, 134, 135, 191, 195, 201
  hymns, 202–7
  life story, 128, 202
Appayya Dīṭcitar, 76n.32, 117n.11, 224
Aramuka Navalar, 225
ARE. See Annual Reports on Epigraphy
arcanā. See (Tamiḻ) *arccaṉai*
arccakaṉ, 36
arccaṉai, 28
architectural canons
  medieval South Indian book, 86
  three styles, 86
Arthaśāstra, 154n.21
aruḷ (grace), 177, 182, 221. *See also* Śaiva Siddhānta
Arunachalam M., 40n.21, 42n.33
Aśoka, 92
ascetic ideal, 169, 172, 184
āśrama, 41n.24
Āṭavallāṉ (Tamiḻ: Naṭarājaṉ), 98
Ātiśaiva, 42n.29
Ātitya I (r. 871–907)
  conquests, 15, 92, 119n.21, 132
  gold roof, 15, 94, 119n.21, 119n.22, 120n.23, 150–51
  Nampi and the canon, 15, 40n.12, 120n.29, 154n.40, 214
  religious policy, 98, 133–36, 173. *See also* Early Cōḻas
Aurangzeb, 17
Āyuta Pūja, 70, 74, 77n.42
Ayyappaṉ, 32, 36, 74, 190
Ayyar, Narayana, 230n.11

Balasubrahmanyam, S.R., 122n.40, 122n.41, 229n.6
bali, 26
bali pīṭam, 27, 29
bali pīṭha. See (Tamiḻ) *bali pīṭam*
Barrett, Douglas, 88, 155n.47
basement of shrine, 87

Beck, Brenda, 154n.35
bells, 34
Bengal
  Gauda Dēsa, 153n.3, 4
  pilgrims from, 186n.13, 188n.32
  prince from, 11, 86, 126, 150, 173–74
  priests origin?, 40n.18, 54, 92, 174–75
  temples of, 117n.8. *See also* Hiraṇyavarman̲
Bhairava, 28, 44n.43
"*bhakti,*" 202, 231n.31
Bhikṣāṭana. *See* (Tamil̲) Piṭcāṭan̲an̲
Big Hall (or Pērampalam). *See* Deva Sabhā
black pillars. *See* modern pillars
Brahmā
  and other gods, 53, 181
  and Viṣṇu fail, Lingōdbhava, 70
  four directions, 57
  four-faced image, 44n.43
  sacrifice in Antarvedī, 43n.41, 178
Brahmā Kūpam well, 25
Brahmā Caṇṭēcuvaran̲, 28
  photo, 95
brahmadēyas, 18, 42n.30, 75n.7, 148, 175. *See also* *caturvēdimangalams;* Smārta Brāhmaṇas
brāhmaṇa, 127, 132, 207, 211, 212, 221
  assistants, 21
  communities, 135, 156n.56
  North Indian, 175
  scholars, 156n.56, 190
  temple priests, 148, 175, 209. Smārta Brāhmaṇas
Buddhism
  and empire, 96, 120n.28, 154n.25
  and Jainas, 96, 132, 143, 191
  and Kaḷabhras, 127–28
  and polity (Aśoka, *cakravartins*), 130
  debate in Citamparam, 128, 195, 194–95, 230n.1
  earlier Buddhist shrines, 128, 153n.13
  in Śrī Laṅka, 131, 154n.38

Cāḷukya, 98, 137
Cambodia
  conquest of, 136
  divine kingship, 137, 138, 155n.51
  founding legend, 127, 153n.5
  king sent a stone, 98, 117n.12, 121n.36, 138
Campantar (or Tiruñānacampanta), 48, 119n.20, 202
  and Appar and Cuntarar, 14, 32, 83, 90, 134, 135, 191, 195, 201
  divine milk, 169, 208
  hymns, 208–10
  life story, 207–8
  "praised himself," 208
Caṅkam, 92, 230n.11
  aham/puram distinction, 59
  classification of regions, 53
  college, 159–60
  love poetry, 58, 172
  oral or written, 155n.45
  traditions of dance, 88
Caṇṭēcuvaran̲
  chariot, 50
  "manager" image, 44n.43, 56
  story, 76n.26
Carnatic Wars, 146
caturvēdimangalams (or *agrahārams*), 42n.30, 156n.56, 174, 175. *See also* Smārta Brāhmaṇas
Cēkkil̲ār, 16, 119n.20, 119n.21, 216–81, 228
  recitation, 103–4, 140–41, 159
  Vēḷāḷa, 49. *See also* Later Cōl̲as
Cempiyan Mahātēvi
  never visited Citamparam, 155n.47
  ritualized memorialization, 137, 155n.47
  temple builder, 136, 216
  wife of Kaṇṭarātitya, 136, 215
"center of the unvierse," 186n.12, 223–24
"centrally administered district" (*taniyūr*), 48, 75n.4, 134, 155n.42
Cēras, 104, 133
Ceṭṭiyārs, 50, 148–49. 158n.77
Chandramaulēsvara, 26
chariot pull, 62
chariot styled shrine, 89
Chidambarastava, 225
Cir̲r̲ampalam (Little Hall), 24, 108, 114, 138
  diagram, 83
  gold roof, 97
  home of Viṣṇu worship?, 91
  name change, 84, 223
  relation with Etirampalam or Opposite Hall, 89, 95, 100, 117n.12, 121n.36
  relation with Pērampalam or Big Hall, 29, 94, 95
cit (consciousness), 35, 84, 186n.12, 223, 229
Cit Sabhā (Cir̲r̲ampalam), 24–28, 83, 84–87, 94, 95, 112
  photo, 95
Cit-ampalam. 84
Citamparam
  the center of Śaivism, 191
  the name change, 84, 223
Citamparamāhātmya, 40n.18, 104, 118n.15, 120n.29, 163, 166–76, 183, 184
Citamparamummaṇikkōvai. *See* Kumarakurupara
cittar (*yogi*), 14
  tradition, 117n.11, 191, 192, 194, 200, 213–14, 227
Clothey, F., 229n.3
Cōl̲a, 127, 137, 151, 184
  anointed by Dīṭcitars, 120n.29
  architectural style, 111
  canon of scriptures, 160

  cosmic ordering, 66–67
  empire, 67, 84, 109, 113, 115, 132, 151, 191, 201
  family interest, 92, 96
  origin, 153n.6
  persecution, 118n.17
  policy on religion, 97, 102, 104, 129–31, 133–35
  progenitor, 131
  royal audience hall, 64, 66, 67, 103
  traditions of Śaivism, 230n.11
Cōlakōṉ, 142
consciousness. *See cit*
conservatism of tradition, 115
Coomaraswamy, Ananda, 226, 227, 229, 232n.49
cosmic cycle (*pañcakiruttiyam*)
  five stage: *ciruṭṭi, titi, caṅkaram, tirōpavam, aṉukkirakam*
  178 (Sanskrit spellings provided), 193–94, 225
court challenges, 18, 41n.21, 41n.22, 41n.24, 148, 158n.76
"Court-Sponsored Forms of Faith," 214–18, 228
cremation ground, 90
Crystal Liṅkam, 25–28, 43n.38
  fourteenth century, 43n.35
cult contacts, a history, 116
cultural interest in temples, 151, 152
Cuntarar (or Cuntaramūrti)
  and Appar and Campantar, 14, 32, 83, 90, 134, 135, 191, 195, 201
  hymn, 212–13
  life story, 211
  "obey the Pallava ruler," 128
  saints' stories, 119n.20, 141, 211–21
Cuntarar Pāṇṭya (r. 1251–1264), 120n.23, 142–44, 153n.15
  built temple, 108
  support Smārta Brāhmaṇas, 42n.30, 156n.56
  vicaya apiṭēkam (victory bath), 108, 143
  vīra apiṭēkam (hero bath), 108, 143
curved leg. *See* Śrī Kuñcitāṅghristavah

Dabhra Sabhā, 84, 120n.22
dahara upāsana (meditation on the subtle or small), 186n.12, 223–24, 229
daily worship routine, 24–28
  earliest evidence of, 43n.35, 43n.39, 222
Dakṣiṇamūrti, 32
dance, 38, 159, 170
  contest, 90, 91
  temple dancers, 51, 74n.3, 75n.10, 88, 160
Dance of Shiva. See Coomaraswamy, Ananda
dance postures, sculptured panels, 121n.38
Dancing Śivaṉ image, 87–89, 98
  date of, 87
  replacements, 87
Daṇḍāyudha, 33
"dark" half year, 67
"dark mysteries of the goddess," 91
darśana, 29, 34, 65
Dārukā. *See* (Tamiḻ) Tārukā
"day of the gods," 55
Deva Sabhā (Pērampalam), 29–30, 70, 94, 95, 97, 103, 114, 120n.23, 138
  diagram, 93. *See also* royal audience hall
dharma, 130, 137
dīkṣā (Tamiḻ *dīṭca* or *tīṭcai*)
  five: *samaya, viśeṣa, nirvāṇa. ācārya* and Paṭanjali (for Dīṭcitars only), 41–42n.26, 160
dīpa. *See* (Tamilized) *dīpam*
dīpam, 25–28, 34–35, 58
Dīṭcitar community, 11, 12, 13, 18, 21, 22, 36–39, 40n.21, 149, 158n.75, 187n.19
  definition, 42n.26
  five initiations, 42n.26
  jumped to death, 17, 123–24n.59
  origin: 175 (from Bengal), 175 (from Antarvedī), 178–79 (from South), 188n.37
  photos, 22, 23
  priest-administrators, 113
  rule books, 41n.25
  treasurers, 41n.23. *See also* Antaṇar; Mūvāyiravar
Dīkṣita. *See* (Tamiḻ) Dīṭcitar
donation, 138, 139, 141–42, 147, 149
Draupadī temple, 86, 117n.8
drāvida temple style, 86
Dumont, Louis, 42n.31
Durgā, 31, 44n.47, 101, 132

east facing shrine, 101, 107, 108, 112
Early Cōḻas (850–950), 15, 82, 93, 95, 97, 116, 131, 136, 173, 216
"Early Expressions of Faith": The Three Streams, 192–214, 227
economic interest in temples, 150, 152
era of "imperial rivalry," 108
ether. *See ākāśa*
esoteric, 89, 95, 97, 103, 194, 200, 201
  defined, 96
Etirampalam (or Opposite Hall). *See* Nṛtta Sabhā

Father Pimento, 17, 123n.59
festival images (*utsava mūrtis*), 60, 76n.25
festival pot, 56
fire sacrifice, 21, 25–26, 36
fishing community, 50, 54, 62–63, 75n.8, 76n.31
"five periods in the . . . history of South India," 116
flag raising, 56
Flower Parade, 51
Full Complex, 98–104, 116
Fuller, C., 156n.59, 158n.73, 188n.35

Ganges River, 64, 98, 131
garbha gṛha, 29
gateway. *See kōpuram*
Gauda Dēsa. *See* Bengal.
goddess. *See* Śivakāmacuntari
goddess temples, 102
Golden Roof, 92–98, 94–95, 116, 119n.21, 119n.22, 120n.23, 133
Gopalakrishnan Bharati, 226
gōpura. See (Tamil) *kōpuram*
gotra, 22
government managers, 20
Gōvintarājan̲, 71, 118n.17, 224
  diagram, 110
  temple, 112, 144, 146

Hall of Consciousness. *See* Cit-ampalam
Hardy, F., 154n.38, 188n.28, 231n.20
Harle, J. C., 81. 117n.1, 121n.38
Harman, William, 230n.12
Hart, George, 188n.27, 231n.17
head priest of festival, 21, 55
  photo, 57
Heesterman, J. C., 154n.20
Hindu Religious Endowments Act, 147–48, 158n.72
Hiraṇyavaraman̲, 40n.18, 126–27, 152n.1, 173–76, 178, 183, 184. *See also* Bengal; Citamparamāhātmya
historical sequence of buildings, 81
Homa Sacrifice, 21, 25–26
Hoysaḷa Empire. 104, 118n.17, 142
huṇḍial, 19
Hundred Pillared Hall, 94, 95–97, 101, 103, 120n.25
  diagram, 93
hymn singing, 96, 97, 132, 201
  cult, 116, 136, 137, 155n.45, 185, 216

ideal models of worship, 176
"in the open," early shrine, 87, 114, 115
independent goddess cult, 90
Indian princes on pilgrimage, 127
Indus Civilization, 131, 154n.34
inscriptions, 79
irrigation, 131, 154n.38
Itaṇkali ("ancestor of Atitya"), 155n.43

"jackals into horses," Māṇikkavācakar, 195
Jainism, 128, 135, 143, 153n.13, 191
  and empire, 96, 120n.28, 130, 154n.25
  Appar converted from, 191, 202
  Campantar competed with, 208
  criticized by Śaiva saints, 90, 132, 135, 231n.23
  urban-based, 49, 130, 132, 135, 143, 191
jñāna, 16

Kailasapathy, K., 155n.45
Kaḷabhra kings, 82, 127–28, 134, 144
  at Citamparam, 48, 84, 127, 134, 150
  king/saint Kūr̲r̲uva, 120n.29, 127
kālams, six times of worship, 24
  fourteenth century evidence, 43n.35, 43n.39
Kālāmukhas, 96
Kālasamdhi Pūja, 25
Kālasamhāramūrti, 33
Kāḷi
  and Śivan̲, 90, 91, 96, 168
  and tiger, 39n.8, 90, 118n.15, 167
  cult, 37, 44n.50, 72, 95, 115, 116, 168, 187n.18
  dance contest, 44n.50, 90, 91, 164, 168, 183, 186n.9
  temple, 17, 44n.47, 52, 69, 71, 106, 109, 142, 168
    detailed description, 187n.19
    diagram, 105
    photo, 107
Kalyāna Cuntaran̲, 27, 43n.38, 69. *See also* festival images
Kāmadhenu, 168
Kanaka Sabhā, 24–28, 34, 38, 44n.42, 50, 51
Kanampullan̲, 212
Kāñcīpuram, 92, 125, 131
Kaṇṭarātitya (r. 949–957), 15, 119n.22, 136, 215, 228
Kāpālika, 96
Kar̲paka Vināyakan̲, 30
Kārttikai Festival, 70
kaṭṭalai, 19, 38, 146, 148–49, 157n.66
kaṭṭalai dīṭcitar, 19
Kashmir, 86, 87
kāvaṭi dance, 88
Kāvēri River
  branch of, 48, 69, 84, 142
  conquest of river valley, 15, 119n.21
  nāṭu system, 92, 94, 125, 130, 131, 133, 191
  sacred, 64, 201
Kerala temples, 36
Kōcceṅkaṇan̲. 96, 119n.20, 129–31, 133, 134, 150, 153n.6, 165–66, 173–74
  life story, 93–94
Koḷḷiṭam River, 48, 69, 84, 125
Koṅku, 15, 92
Kōpperuñciṅkan̲ (r. 1231–1279) 31, 32, 44n.47, 108
  built Kāḷi temple, 44n.50, 106, 142, 168, 187n.19
  built Liṅkam temple, 37, 106–7, 123n.51, 142, 220
  date, 123n.48, 156n.55
  religious policy, 143
  support of Smārta Brāhmaṇas, 17, 40n.17, 40n.18, 42n.30, 174. *See also* orthodoxy
kōpuram (gateway), 24, 81, 114, 123n.59
  dance posture sculptures, 121n.38

three traditions of sculpture, 121n.38 (full description) photo, 102
  east: 31, 97, 100, 108, 142
    diagram, 99
    diagram of relocation, 105
    photo, 101
  north: 111
    diagram, 110
    photo, 111
  south: 31, 52, 97, 108, 142
    diagram, 93
  west: 30, 31, 97, 100, 108
    diagram, 99
    photo, 95
  for Gōvintarājan̲, 112
koṭiyēr̲r̲am. See flag raising
Kōyil, 6, 37, 113, 152
Kōyil Purāṇa, 12n.3, 40n.18, 50, 52–53, 67, 94, 120n.29, 122n.44, 160, 163, 183, 184
  content, 176–82
Kṛṣṇatēvarāya, 111
kuca grass (Sanskrit *kuśa*), 25, 55, 56, 76n.24
Kulacēkara, 91, 118n.16, 140, 153n.16
Kulōttuṅka I (r. 1070–1122)
  built full complex, 82, 95, 100, 103, 120n.23, 138–39, 151
  new line, 16, 98, 126, 137, 151
  piracacti, 138–39, 217
  sacred stone from Cambodia, 117n.12, 137–38. *See also* Nāralōkavīran̲
Kulōttuṅka II (r. 1133–1150)
  built Rāja Sabhā?, 103–4, 120n.23, 122n.44
  had Cēkkil̲ār compose Periya Purāṇa, 122n.45, 140
  piracacti, 122n.42, 139, 141
  "thrown a Viṣṇu image into the sea," 111, 140, 155n.53
Kulōttuṅka III (r. 1178–1218), 122n.45, 122n.46
  piracacti, 141–42
Kulke, H., 126, 155n.51, 169
Kumarakuruparar, 225
Kūr̲r̲uva (Kaḷabhra king/saint), 120n.29, 127, 212

Later Cōl̲a (1070–1279), 100, 116, 137–42, 150, 174, 216
"leg of grace," 34, 43n.35, 43n.39, 43n.41
library, 161n.1
"light" half year, 67
Lingōdbhava, 70, 188n.30
liṅkam, 31, 70, 98, 112, 137, 167, 169, 184
  cult, 37, 116, 169
  in Śiva Purāṇa, 88, 219–20
  temple, 17, 29, 88, 106–7, 108, 109, 113, 114, 115, 117n.12, 123n.51, 142, 169
    diagram, 105
literate/non-literate, 135
Little Hall (Cir̲r̲ampalam), 14, 24, 84, 89, 91, 94, 115, 120n.22
Loud, John, 157n.67, 158n.75
love-in-separation, 172

Māci month, 57, 73, 97, 114, 182
MacKenzie, Colonel, 18, 146, 157n.67
Mādhava Vidyāraṇya, 112
Mahābhārata, 167, 168, 187n.21
  birds and snakes, 172–73, 188n.31
mahākumbhābhiṣekam, 30, 114, 149, 158n.77
Mahalingam, T. V., 155n.42
Mahendravarman̲, 128–29, 143, 191, 202
Mahiṣāsuramardinī, 31
major shrines, five, 20, 28–30, 81
malam (stains), 178
  three: *āṇava* (ego), *karma* (action), *māyā* (matter), 181, 220–21, 222
management of temple, 19, 156n.61
"manager" of temple. *See* Caṇṭēcuvaran̲
Māṇikkavācakar
  absorbed in deity, 117n.11, 159
  date, 39n.2, 83, 88, 128, 134, 195
  hymns, 134, 135, 159, 172,191
  image of, 32, 66, 201
    photo, 196
  life story, 5, 70, 88, 128, 144, 150, 151, 160, 194–96
  model of devotion, 57–59, 66, 201
  mystical devotionalism, 89, 191, 194, 196–97, 214, 227
  Tirukōvaiyār, 91, 159, 196
  Tiruvācakam, 13, 51, 159, 196–201
  Tiruvemp̄vai, 54, 58, 75n.22, 201
Man̲avācakam Kaṭantār. *See* Uṇmaiviḷakkam
mantras, 21, 25–26, 55, 56
Marāthas, 147
Māriyamman̲, 71, 74
Mārkal̲i month, 54, 58, 66, 73, 224
  eleventh century festival, 74n.3
  fourteenth century festival, 181
  Tiruvempāvai recitation, 54, 58, 75n.22, 201
marriage halls, 96
maṭam (or *ātīn̲am*), 36, 142, 152
  defined, 41n.24
  history of, 139, 156n.65
  of Śaṅkara (Vedānta), 35, 112, 145, 223
  of Umāpati, 182, 221
  Vēḷāḷa (Śaiva Siddhānta), 28, 35, 49, 145–46, 152
maṭha. See (Tamil̲) *maṭam*
Max Muller F., 233
Maturai, 92, 123n.58, 125, 131, 144, 195
Meykaṇṭar Sāstras, 220–21

Meykaṇṭar Tēvar, 34, 49, 177, 182, 220, 221
Middle Cōḻas (985–1044), 136, 173, 216
Mīnākṣī. *See* (Tamiḻ) Mīṉāṭci
Mīṉāṭci, 72, 143, 145, 191
minor shrines, ten, 20, 30–33, 81
modern pillars, 87, 114, 116, 149
Mūlastānam Uṭaiyār, 123n.51
Murukaṉ, 31, 33, 56, 88, 169, 190
  festival, 71
  temple, 29, 108, 143
music, 38, 51, 57, 116, 159, 160–61, 226
Muslim invasions
  of North, 106, 166, 173, 185
  of South, 82, 109, 145, 147, 156n.62, 185
Mutaliȳr, 71, 147, 148
Muthuswami Dikshitar, 226
Mūvāyiravar (Three Thousand) community, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15, 91, 100, 118n.17, 135, 175, 179, 180, 188n.33, 194, 214
  three thousand verses in Tirumantiram, 192
Muyalaka (demon), 222

Nāga ascetics, 42n.31
nāgara temple style, 86
Nāgārjunakoṇḍā relief of thatch roofed temple, 86, 117n.8
Nagaswamy, R., 155n.49
naivēttiyam, 25
nākacuram horns, 25, 47
nakṣatra, 75n.12
Nalaipōvar. *See* Nantaṉ
Nampi Āṇṭār Nampi, 119n.20, 141, 202
  date, 154n.40, 155n.43, 228
  edit hymns and life stories of saints, 120n.29, 134–35, 159, 202, 214–15
Nandanar Charitram. *See* Gopalakrishna Bharati
Nantaṉ, 211
Nanṭi's drum, 56
Nāralōkavīraṉ, 51, 100–103, 115–16, 120n.23, 138, 140, 151
Nātamuṉi, 214
Naṭarājaṉ cult, 116
nāṭu (state); 134, 154n.37
  irrigation base, 131, 201
  temples, 68, 132, 133, 137, 145, 150–51, 201
Navaratnam, Ratna, 231n.14
Navarātri, 30, 70
Nāṭyaśāstra, 121n.38
Nāyak (or Nāyakkar), 17, 110, 123n.59, 147
nāyanmār (Śaiva saints), 32, 129, 135, 153n.17, 211
"never leave," priestly vow, 24, 39n.7
"never to return," united with the deity, 117n.11, 224
Nīlakaṇṭaṉ, 211–12
nivedya. *See* (Tamiḻ) *naivēttiyam*
non-*brāhmaṇa* singers, 28
North Indian origin of Naṭarājaṉ, arguments for, 88
North Indian temple style, 86
North Indian pilgrims, 82, 106, 118n.15, 166–76, 183, 184
Nṛtta Sabhā (Etirampalam), 29, 33, 95, 97, 100, 103, 114, 115, 138
  base of Kāḷi worship, 44n.50, 90, 95, 115
  confusion over inscriptions, 117–18n.12, 121n.36
  description, 89–90
  diagram, 83

odd features of the central shrine, 86–87
O'Flaherty (Doniger), Wendy, 187–88n.26
"oldest structure in the whole temple complex," 90
"one with them," Śivaṉ and the Dīṭcitars, 21, 39n.4, 75n.13, 178–79, 188n.37
Opposite Hall (Etirampalam). *See* Nṛtta Sabhā
Orthodox Śaiva Revisions, 104–9, 116
orthodoxy, 106, 107, 108, 143, 168, 175, 218–19, 221
ōtuvārs, 28, 49, 57, 58, 96, 214
  allowed on porch, 38, 44n.42, 231–32n.32

pācas (bonds), 53, 182, 220
pacu (soul), 182, 220
Pallava Empire, 84, 90, 91, 92, 125, 126, 128–29, 132, 133, 191, 201, 202, 229
  pretender (Kōpperuñciṅkaṉ), 17, 104, 106, 142–43, 151, 156n.58, 220
paḷḷipaṭai (or funereal temple), 136, 155n.47
Paḷḷiyaṟai, 25, 28
pāṇaṉ (or pāṇar), 88, 159, 201, 208
pañcāṭcaram. *See* *Śi-va-ya-na-ma*
pañcakiruttiyam. *See* cosmic cycle
pañcāmṛtam, 26
Pāṇṭya Empire, 30, 84, 90, 92, 104, 106, 125, 127, 132–33, 141, 142, 151, 201, 202
  Campantar's challenge, 208
  "fish" crest, 108
  minister, 88, 128, 194–95
  mythic heroes, 143
  temple, 29, 105, 108–9
    photo, 109
  Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam, 144, 191
  tradition of Śaivism, 191, 230n.11
Parāntaka I (r. 907–953), 92, 94, 98, 119n.22, 135, 136
Pāśupata, 96
Paṭañcali, 52, 60, 69, 164–65, 169, 170–73
  definition, 171
  earliest references, 186n.10, 186n.11

  model devotee, 170, 172, 179, 183–84, 186n.29, 197–98
  photo, 165
Paṭañjali, 24, 160, 171, 218
  grammar book in procession, 160
Paṭañjali Pūjāsūtram, 24, 160
Pati (Lord), 182, 220
Peasant Hymn Singers, 195, 201–14
peasant society, 131
Pērampalam (or Big Hall). *See* Deva Sabhā and Rāja Sabhā
Perumpaṟṟappuliyūr, 144, 156n.60, 186n.8
Periya Purāṇa, 103, 120n.29, 141, 159, 216–18. *See also* Cēkkiḻār
"Philosophical Reflections on the Dancing God," 192, 228
pilgrims. *See* North Indian pilgrims
Pillai, Srinivasa, 230n.11
piracacti (Sanskrit *praśasti*), 122n.42, 138–39, 139–40, 141, 141–42, 217
piracātam, 33
pirakāram, 27, 28, 29, 81, 100
  second, 114
  third, 114
Piṭāri (or Piṭāriyar). *See* Kāḷi
Piṭcāṭaṉaṉ, 59, 74, 76n.29
  in Tārukā, 170
Piṭṭu Festival, 70
planet images, 31–32
Pope, G. U., 128, 195, 231n.15
  on date of Māṇikkavācakar, 230n.10, 230n.11
political interest in temples, 150, 152
politics of Tamiḻnāṭu, 148
popular religious tradition, 134, 135
porch of Cit Sabhā, 87
porches
  first wall
    photo, 62
  temple tank, 84
    diagram, 99
  third wall, 97, 114
Potu Dīṭcitars, 19, 22, 41n.26, 44n.42, 149
prakāra. *See* (Tamiḻ) *pirakāram*
prasāda. *See* (Tamiḻ) *piracātam*
processions, 55
  structure of: dark and light, 59, 73, 76n.23
processional images, 43n.38, 76n.25
Puliyūr (Tigertown), 14, 39n.8, 52, 90, 119n.22, 164, 167–68, 186n.7, 187n.17
puṇḍarīka, 186n.12

Rahacya, 27, 35, 37, 43n.40, 112–13, 186n.12, 223, 229
Rahasya. *See* (Tamiḻ) Rahacya
Rāja of Ceṭṭināṭu, 19, 50
Rāja Sabhā, 30, 40n.21, 63–64, 81, 94, 103–4, 116, 120n.23, 122n.44, 140
  diagram, 99
  photo, 111
Rājarāja I (r. 985–1017), 15, 40n.12, 98, 100, 104, 136, 137, 138
  royal temple, 155n.48
Rājarāja III (r. 1216–1246), 104, 106, 142
Rājēndra I (r. 1012–1044), 15, 98, 100, 104, 137, 138
rakṣābandha. *See* (Tamiḻ) *raṭcapantaṉam*
Ramalinga Swamigal, 225–26
Rāmānuja, 112, 118n.17, 140, 224
rapture, 34
Rāṣṭrakūṭa Empire, 92
raṭcapantaṉam, 55
Ratna Sabhāpati, 27, 43n.38, 43n.41
Rāvaṇa, 59, 76n.27
Reconstructed Early Tradition, 164
rectangular building, 85–86
religion and politics, 129–31, 137
  kings and priests, 174–76
  patterns
    classical, 129–30
    medieval, 130–31
  types of arrangements: Cōḻa, Pallava, Pāṇṭya, 143
Renovations, 113–14
  Committee, 149, 158n.78
ritual duties of priests, 20
"ritual ordering of space," 57
Rowland, B., 155n.41
royal ceremonial cult, 116
rotation of priestly duties, 20
royal audience hall (in Citamparam), 30, 64, 76n.34, 97, 103, 104, 122n.44, 140, 181
royal temple (in Tañcavūr), 98, 136–37, 155n.48, 173, 216
Ruby Naṭarājaṉ. *See* Ratna Sabhāpati
Rudra Apiṭēkam, 31

sacred space, 68–69
sacred stone, 100, 138
Sadaśaiva Paṇḍarathār, T. V., 154n.40
Śaiva, 135, 143, 168, 190
  answer to Kāḷi worship, 172
  answer to Viṣṇu worship, 172
  canon, 155n.44
  holy days, 69
  hymns, 134, 135, 155n.45
  hymnsingers, 202
  images, 169
  myth, 168–69
  saints, 151, 153n.17
  saints' lives, 134, 141

Śaiva (*cont.*)
  temples, 133, 137, 145, 164
  tradition, 134, 141, 143, 163, 190, 191, 202, 213–14, 223
sacred time, 67–68
Śaiva Siddhānta
  great theologian, Umāpati, 163, 177
  maṭams, 28, 38, 44n.42, 49
  school of Meykaṇṭar, 34, 49, 113, 152, 177, 179, 184, 190, 192, 227
  theological terms, 53, 75n.17, 177, 182, 185, 220–22, 223
Śaivism, 190–91, 220, 223, 227
Śaṅkara, 34, 112, 223
Śarabhēśvara, 33
Śāstrikaḷ, 21, 55, 56
sculptures of Śivan̲ on *kōpurams*, 122n.38
Second Kālam or Iraṇṭu Kālam, 27
seashore, 52–54, 75n.14
Secretary of Assembly, 19
Sectarian Additions, 109–13
Shulman, D. D., 115, 118n.15, 163, 167, 186n.9
"service castes," 49
Śi-va-ya-na-ma (or *Na-ma-śi-va-ya*), 179, 193–94, 222
Śivādvaita, 224
Śivagangā tank, 28, 31, 82–84, 103
  diagram, 99
  steps, 100
Śivakāmacuntari (or Śivakāmi), 28, 70, 96, 100, 103, 106
  contrast with Mīn̲āṭci, 72
  festival and marriage, 72, 120n.25
  temple, 115, 116
    diagram, 99
    photo, 111
Śivan̲ ñāna pōtam, 220
Śiva Purāṇa, 88, 106, 169, 187n.21, 218–20, 221
Sivaraman, K., 232n.37
Sivaramamurti, C., 88, 121n.38, 232n.45, 232n.46
Smārta Brāhmaṇas
  defined, 18, 42n.30, 50, 75n.7
  followers of Vedānta, 34, 88, 175
  working in the temple, 17, 21, 40n.17, 40n.21, 55, 123n.59, 148, 156n.57, 158n.75
snakes
  adornment with, 170
  birds and, 172–73
  snake kings, 171
  sacred, 171
Somaskantan̲, 43n.38, 56, 76n.25, 107, 187n.22, 187n.23
  defined, 169. *See also* festival images
south facing shrine, 85, 145
South Indian origin of Naṭarājan̲, arguments for, 88
Śrī Cidambara Kṣetra Sarvasvam, 42n.33, 74n.2, 120n.25
Śrī Kuñcitāṅghristavaḥ (Curved Leg), 12n.2, 43n.35, 43n.39, 43n.41, 188n.38, 222
  photo, 221
Śrīkaṇṭa, 224
Śrī Laṅka, 54, 84, 126, 136, 141, 226
  founder story, 152n.1, 153n.5
  irrigation, 131, 154n.38
  king in Citamparam, 48, 127, 128, 195
  reformer, 225
Śrīmat Sūta Samhitā Samgrahah, 24
Śrīraṅkam, 34, 120n.23, 123n.58, 140, 142, 145, 155n.52, 188n.39
Śrī Sabhānayakar, 19, 42n.27
stānikas. *See* Vēḷāḷa priests
Stein, Burton, 154n.33, 154n.37, 155n.49, 158n.79, 229n.6
Subbiah, G., 231n.16, 231n.19
Sunset Kālam (or Samdhya Kālam), 27
Swamy, B.G.L., 87, 117n.5, 157n.67, 186n.14

Tai Pūcam, 69
Takkōlam, 92, 135–36, 215
tala purāṇa, 8, 163–64, 185n.2
  reasons for writing, 163
Tañcavūr, 92, 98, 132
  sculpture panels of dance postures, 121n.38
  sculptured replica of Cit Sabhā, 87, 98, 137
  temple, 136–37
Taṇḍavamūrti-Kāḷi, 33
raniyūr (or capital area), 134
Tarumapuram Atīnam, 157n.66
Tārukā, 60, 164, 170
Tatvāryāstava, 225
teenaged priests, 23
temple as center of *nāṭu*, 132
temple complex
  concept, 102
temple dancers (or *tēvatācis*), 88
temple tank. *See* Śiva Gangā tank
Tēvāram, 28, 49, 120n.29, 126, 135, 137, 159, 160, 191, 214, 216, 227
textual community, 135
Thatch Hut, 82–92, 116
Thapar, Romila, 154n.31
thatch styled roof, 86
"three systems of early Śaivism," 195, 213–14
"Theologically Formulated Expressions of Faith," 218–22, 228
three temples on one sacred spot, 91
"thrown a Viṣṇu image into the sea," 91, 111, 119n.19

tiger. *See* Puliyūr
tillai
  "court," 198–99
  forest, 86, 90, 125, 164, 167, 173, 183
  "home of joy," 199–200
  place, 5, 16, 115, 186n.6, 217
  tree, 11, 48, 84, 117n.5
    photo, 85
tillai vāl antaṇar tam aṭiyārkkum aṭiyēn, 15, 135, 159, 211
Tipu Sultan, 40n.21
Tirucirāpaḷḷi, 104
Tirukōvaiyār, 72, 91, 118n.16, 159, 196
Tirumaṅkai, 91, 118n.16, 119n.20, 128, 140, 153n.16
Tirumūlar, 82, 88, 117n.11, 151, 191, 195, 213, 227
  date, 229n.7
  Tirumantiram, 192–94
Tirumuṟai, 135, 161, 215, 220
Tirumuṟai Kaṇṭa Purāṇam of Umāpati, 40n.12
Tirumuṟai Kāṭṭiya Vināyakaṉ, 32
tirunāḷ, 46
Tiruppāvai, 76n.22
Tiruvācakam, 13, 51, 159, 196–201
Tiruvārūr, 18, 40n.21, 146, 157n.67
Tiruvāturai, 54
Tiruvempāvai, 54, 58, 76n.22, 201
Tiruvicaippā, 119n.22, 215–16
Tiruviḷaiyāṭal Purāṇam, 144, 153n.15
  on Māṇikkavācakar, 195, 230n.9, 230n.10
  written in Citamparam, 156n.60, 186n.8, 230n.12

Umāpati Śivācārya, 12n.2, 39n.10, 40n.12, 43n.35, 43n.39, 43n.41, 53, 119n.21, 120n.29, 122n.45, 134, 185
  argues for South Indian origin of priests, 40n.18
  date, 185n.4
  Kōyil Purāṇa, 163, 176–82
  life story, 177, 188n.36, 221
  Śaiva Siddhānta theologian, 152, 179, 220–22
Uṇmaiviḷakkam, 222
Upamanyu, 168, 187n.21
Uṟaiyūr, 92, 132, 133
ūrdhva tāṇḍava, 44n.50, 66, 168, 183

vāhana, 47, 56
Vaikai River, 70, 195
Vaikhānasa ritual, 112
Vaiṣṇavas, 118n.17, 120n.28, 129, 130, 132, 137, 140, 143
  canon, 155n.44, 214
  hymns, 155n.45, 172
  hymnsingers, 201, 214
  temples, 145, 146, 154n.25, 155n.53
Vanmikanathan, G., 231n.14
Varuṇa, 52, 53, 57, 73, 182
vastu puruṣa, 186n.12, 223–24
Vāttiyār, 21
Vedachalam, Swami (or Maṟaimalaiyātikaḷ), 230n.11
Vedas, 14, 15, 16, 24, 25, 42n.30, 96, 156n.57
vedic
  rituals, 36, 43n.37, 134, 218
  sacrifices, 175, 182, 192
Vedānta, 43n.40, 112–13, 116, 192, 224, 226
  defined, 223
Vēḷāḷa community, 49, 50, 51, 61, 69, 131–32, 133, 139, 148, 182, 191, 201, 202
  stānikas (priests), 187n.19, 221
Veḷḷaivāraṇaṉ, K., 154n.40
Veḷḷaru River, 83
Vēḷvikuṭi grant, 127
vesara temple style, 86
Vicayālaya, 92, 132
Vicayanakaram, 17, 82, 91, 110–13, 140, 144–45, 223
Vikrama (r. 1118–1135), 103, 120n.23
  piracacti, 139–40
vilva leaves (Sanskrit: *bilva*), 25, 35, 113
vilva tree, 30
vimāna, 86, 100
Vināyakaṉ, 30, 31, 32, 33, 55, 56, 120n.29, 134, 169
  festival, 71
vipūti, 19
Viṣṇu, 17, 53, 70, 104, 108, 164–65, 181
  and Śivaṉ, 60, 172
  as Mōhinī, 60, 170, 172, 187n.26
  earlier temple?, 90–92
  present temple, 111–12, 113, 114, 115, 116, 118n.16, 120n.23, 123n.59, 140, 145
Viśiṣṭādvaita, 220, 224
Viyākirapāta, 43n.41, 166–70, 178, 179, 183, 184, 186n.16
Vyāghrapāda. *See* (Tamil) Viyākirapāta

walls, 97, 103
  numbering, 121n.31
  first, 100, 108, 112, 114
    diagram, 99
  second, 108, 113–14
  third, 97, 100, 114
    diagram, 99

walls (*cont.*)
  fourth, 113, 147
    diagram, 110
western half of central shrine, 87
winter solstice, 54
Wittfogel, K., 154n.30
wooden building, 85
wooden temple style, 86
worship activities
  sixteen forms, 219

yajña, 31
yogi. *See cittar*

Zvelebil, K., 88, 155n.47, 230n.11

The Home of Dancing Śivan̲ is an inquiry into the traditions of the Citamparam temple in South India, the only Hindu temple where the image of Śivan̲ as Naṭarājan̲, the dancer, is the central focus of worship. Younger begins with the living traditions, describing the community of Dīṭcitars, the two hundred priests of the temple who carry on an ancient tradition involving six worship periods each day, and discusses in detail the elaborate temple festivals, which attract up to 200,000 people. He analyzes the three hundred inscriptions on the temple walls, and seeks to determine from them, and from the evidence of art history, when the many components of the temple were constructed and what innovations in the worship tradition they made possible. Using the inscriptions and the abundant literature about the temple, he also addresses the complex historical questions regarding the roles played by famous kings and saints of the region in the life of the temple.

The traditions of the Citamparam temple reflect the worship style of all important Hindu temples, and its history is central to all history, literature, and thought of South India. This unique study acknowledges the centrality of the temple in Indian life and society, and provides a vivid and engaging portrait of South India's living religion for students of religious studies, Asian studies, and Indian civilization.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Paul Younger, Ph.D., is Professor of Religious Studies at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada. He attended Banaras Hindu University, India, and was a founding member of its International Studies Program in 1957. He is the author of four other books, including *Introduction to Indian Religious Thought* (Westminster, 1972), and *From Asoka to Rajiv: Patterns of Popular Culture in India* (Popular Prakashan, 1986).

The Home of Dancing Sivan: The Tradition
Was ~~$58.00~~
Now $32.00
431439
Trade Price: N/A
Points: N/A

Cover design by Jeffrey J. Faville

ISBN 0-19-509533-2